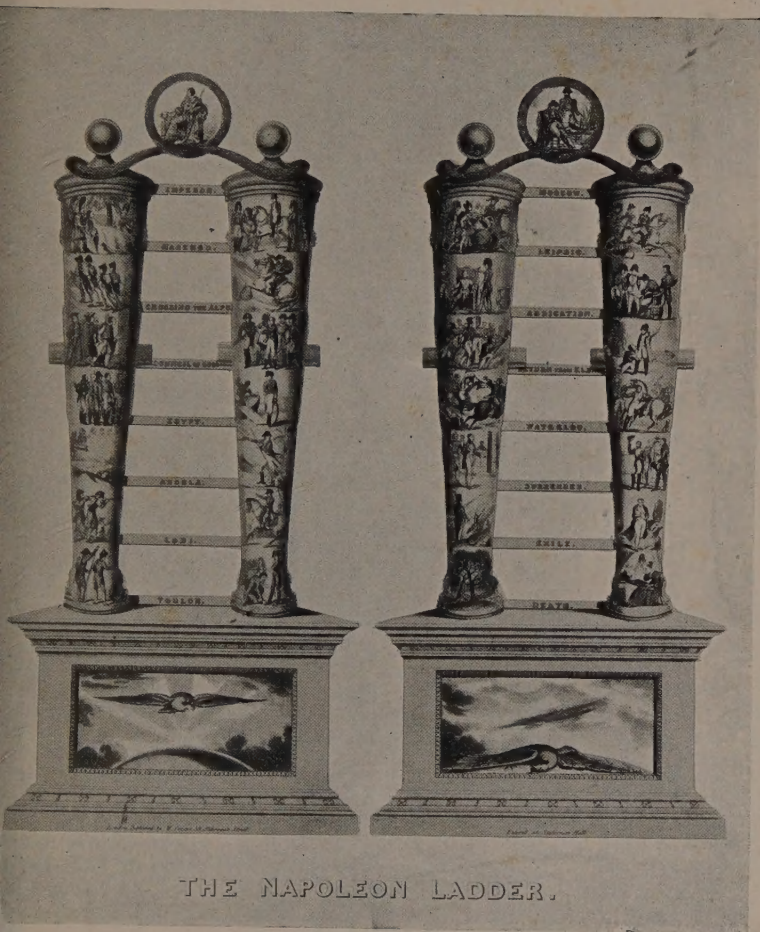




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FROM A SCARCE PRINT

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

LIFE OF NAPOLEON

BY

MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITHS

AUTHOR OF "WELLINGTON AND WATERLOO,"

"FRENCH REVOLUTIONARY GENERALS,"

ETC. ETC.

With very numerous Portraits and Illustrations by Appiani, Berthon, Canova, Charlet, David, Delaroche, Gérard, Greuze, Gros, Guérin, Isaby, Levachez, Meissonnier, Prudhon, Vernet and many others.

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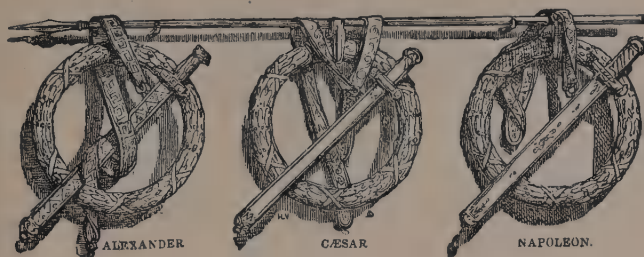
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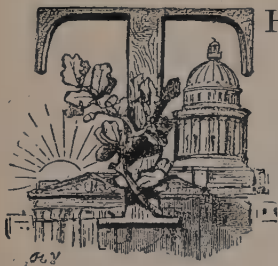
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CHAPTER I

EARLY DAYS—1769-1793



HE Napoleonic legend is a topic full of vitality and absorbing interest: it holds the mind with a force and tenacity that seems to deepen with illustration. The more men

hear of Napoleon the more they desire to know. In his adopted country—for he was really no Frenchman—the cult has been carried to absurd lengths. His personality and his epoch, his transcendent talents and what they achieved, his Court and surroundings, the beginnings and end

of his romantic and adventurous career, from the first rocket-like rise to his tragic downfall, his apogee and his perigee, have received universal, even fulsome, attention in France. Art and Literature, Society and the Stage, all alike do him great honour. Painters seek their inspiration in the chief incidents in his history; writers of every calibre have dealt with his life and times, in diaries and memoirs, paste-and-scissor records, thoughtful philosophic essays towards a full appreciation of his character; the fashions of the Directory, the Consulate and the Empire have long been in favour with the fair sex; furniture and decorations of the period are largely imitated; *Madame Sans-Gêne*, with its mimic presentment of Napoleon's strength and weakness, is one of the most popular plays of the time.

Nor does the craze run riot in France alone. It reaches more extravagant heights beyond the Atlantic: America worships the Napoleonic idea; it is the best "draw" possible in a free country with a free people, who overlook the fact that he was the most despotic ruler the world has ever known.

No more splendid monument has been raised to his grandeur than the elaborate work lately prepared by Professor Sloane. Here in England, too, the country of his peculiar and persistent aversion, which he never dared attack, but would have ruined insidiously by his commercial system, Napoleon enjoys unbounded popularity. Every book about him is read with avidity; new works elucidating new phases in his many-sided character appear continually, and are welcomed widely; they are in large demand at the booksellers and the lending libraries. The walls of the Academy year after year bear witness to the hold he has on the artistic imagination; adaptations from the French stage attract large audiences at London theatres.

It is easier to state the fact than explain it. It is largely due, no doubt, to the contagion of hero-worship, the ready admiration accorded by the crowd of smaller men to one of the great giants of the human race: a tribute rendered with ungrudging enthusiasm, yet a little inconsiderately, even blindly, forgetting that its object often deserved detestation rather than respect. The

effect of all this eulogy and panegyric laid on so thickly and with such a large brush is to obscure the truth, to cover up the faults, the shortcomings, the really malignant nature of the man himself. He is presented to us as the mighty conqueror, the incomparable statesman, the far-seeing, large-minded administrator; we hear of his unerring generalship, his masterly manipulation of his fellow-men from kings to conscripts; of his capacious brain, in which details innumerable were stored ready for immediate use; of his kindly, winning smile, his unfailing generosity to ungrateful relatives—everything, in short, to his credit, nothing of his crimes.

For if he was a great genius, the greatest, perhaps, the world has seen, he was also one of the greatest criminals. It may seem to pass the bounds of historical criticism to call him a murderer, a brigand, and a thief; yet the indictment can be maintained that he was all these, and on the largest scale. He sent men wholesale to their deaths: a couple of million Frenchmen, as many more of other races—allies or enemies—were butchered to create, maintain, or defend

his power. He remorselessly slew the Duc d'Enghien to secure his hold of the throne. He began his robberies in his first Italian campaign: after the spoliation of specie and cash he stole territories and crowns. He was a scourge to Europe; his path was bloodshed and rapine as devastating as the cholera or the "black death." And all this was for personal aggrandisement, the gratification of his greed and lust of power, of his insatiable hunger for conquest, his cravings for military renown. He was no patriot; he had no country of his own. Since Corsica had discarded him, he fought for his own hand, not for France. And France, which he had raised for a short space to a pinnacle of great glory, he left torn and bleeding, depopulated, impoverished, saved only from dismemberment by the generous championship of Wellington.

This is the truer estimate of one who was, under some aspects, a devil incarnate—a monster in human form, as he has been described in the pages of Taine, Lanfrey, Seeley, and a few more. This is the judicial view, calm and dispassionate, based on the plain evidence of acts and conduct, rising

superior to sentiment. Taine explains Napoleon as a fifteenth-century survival, a "throw-back" to another race in an earlier epoch : he is a freak of nature reproducing the great Italian tyrants, the all-powerful condottieri, the soldiers of fortune who, striking out boldly at great stakes, raised themselves to thrones or perished in the attempt. Napoleon was one by inheritance, an Italian of clear, straight descent, a child of the land that produced the Sforzas, the Viscontis, the Borgias, "a posthumous brother of Dante and Michael Angelo," ranking with them in mental qualities. "His genius," says Taine, "is of the same stature, the same structure ; he is one of the three sovereign minds of the Italian Renaissance, except that while the two first work on paper or marble, the last operates on the living being, on the sensitive suffering flesh of humanity." It is this which constitutes Napoleon an evil-doer. Crime has been well defined as a refusal to abide by rules that men, for their general protection, agree to call binding. Napoleon accepted no such obligation ; he set all such rules at defiance ; his arrogant, all-embracing

egoism was above the law ; the eternal *ego*, the limitless selfishness, cold-blooded and calculating, that gathered in everything to his support, needed in his opinion no explanation or justification.

We may accept Taine's as a psychological explanation. Napoleon's extraordinary gifts were, no doubt, congenital : first and last he was an Italian. It was to be seen in his features, in his accent, in his ways. The fine face, with its clear-cut, classical profile, the rich lips, the strong, well-modelled chin, reproduced the best type of the Italian antique. He talked French with the accent of a foreigner, more Corsican than Italian, for in the language of his ancestors he was never perfectly fluent. His manners, his gestures, were Italian. His fierce explosions of rage, often purposely assumed by this most consummate actor of any part, the torrents of his talk, when roused, objurgatory, persuasive, poetic, with all the powers of the improvisatore—all these were traits of the impassioned South.

We must seek beyond atavism and heredity for the secret of Napoleon's marvellous development. "The miracle of

his rise to power lies not so much in his personality as in the time." He was really the product of his epoch ; but for the *milieu* in which he was planted, his vast genius would never have properly expanded. He found his opportunity in the state of France after the Revolution ; he came to the surface after a tremendous upheaval, which had torn up and dislocated all old institutions ; they were lying there ready to be pieced together by the master hand, whether for the national advantage or for his own ends. The weapon, too, was already fashioned for the craftsman. When France, having aroused the antagonism of all Europe, unanimously flew to arms in her own defence, she laid the foundation of her own enslavement by the first unscrupulous soldier that dared to wield the sword. It must never be forgotten that Napoleon did not create the situation that eventually gave him his supremacy. It already existed before he came to the front. More : under different circumstances, had fate so ruled, its advantages, with its tremendous results, might have been snatched at by some other soldier of the Republic. But for the luck

that stood by Bonaparte in his early years : the chance that he escaped the English cruisers in the Mediterranean on his return from Egypt ; the miscarriage of Kléber's letter that warned the Directory against the coming conspiracy ; the death of Hoche, so premature, yet so fortunate for his rival that the almost impossible theory has been started that Bonaparte had had him poisoned—but for those happy accidents—some other military adventurer would probably, nay, inevitably, have become master of France. Moreau, Bernadotte, Desaix, Masséna, and many more were capable of winning great victories. Supreme power lay within the grasp of any successful soldier. We may go further, and wonder whether a smaller man would not have been a greater benefactor to France. A lesser ambition would have been contented with less showy but still sufficiently solid achievements. The immensity of Napoleon's genius, the fever of his restless, far-reaching mind, were as mischievous to his country as they proved disastrous to himself.

That there is no exaggeration in this severe judgment of Napoleon, it may be

pointed out that he formed much the same opinion of himself. Despite the powers of his imagination, his constant habit of taking things as he wished them to be, and not as they were, he had no illusions about himself. He once roundly confessed that he believed it would have been better for the whole world if neither he nor Rousseau had ever lived. Again, when one of his most devoted adherents enlarged upon the regrets that would be felt at his death, Napoleon corrected him, "Not at all," and drawing in his breath, as with a sense of infinite relief, he said, "They'll cry, 'Ouf! we are well rid of him.'" He never tried to deceive himself as to his real aims: he meant to be master, an autocrat universal and omnipotent. Yet he had no confidence in the stability of his power, the abiding permanence of his rule. "It will last just as long as I do. After me, my son may deem himself fortunate if he has forty thousand francs a year." He deeply pitied his poor, weak little son at the weight of the troubles he would bequeath him.

Napoleon Bonaparte was born, according



CHARLES BONAPARTE, FATHER OF NAPOLEON

born 1746; died 1785)

to the official registers, on August 15, 1769. Some doubt has been cast upon the accuracy of this date, but if we accept it we must believe also that Napoleon narrowly escaped being born an Englishman—a strange circumstance upon which but little stress has been laid hitherto. This date has been called in question. It has been said that Napoleon was really the eldest son, and Joseph the second: that the Corsican registers had been tampered with in order to allow Charles Bonaparte, the father, to accept the nomination at Brienne for the child most fitted for a military career. Napoleon is said to have himself hinted that he was born in 1768; but the other is the date recorded in history; it is that on which the Emperor's birthday was kept, on his own authority; the day on which he assured Bourrienne, when they were at school together, that he was born. The later year has, therefore, the strongest evidence to support it, and it supports the curious theory, just advanced, that he might have been an Englishman.

Charles Bonaparte had been the friend and favourite aide-de-camp of Paoli, and

when Corsica submitted to France in 1769 the disappointed patriot urged the young man to accompany him into exile. Napoleon in after years was of opinion that his father should have done so; he went further, and declared that he would never forgive his father for his desertion of Paoli.

Paoli withdrew to England, where other Corsicans followed him. Their children were born in this country, educated here, naturalised here, lived and died here. One, Count Rivarola, served as an officer in the English army. Can imagination take a wilder flight than in picturing Napoleon with the King's commission, his military talents shut down in the regimental ranks, for he would have lacked the influence and family connections that were in those days indispensable for advancement in the English army! He would have been an old subaltern, at most a captain in some marching regiment, serving perhaps under Field-Marshal the Marquis of Wellington in the invasion of France. Or say that he had thrown himself into some other career, that he had been foiled in his natural bent towards the profession of arms—which has



LETITIA RAMOLINO BONAPARTE, MOTHER OF NAPOLEON

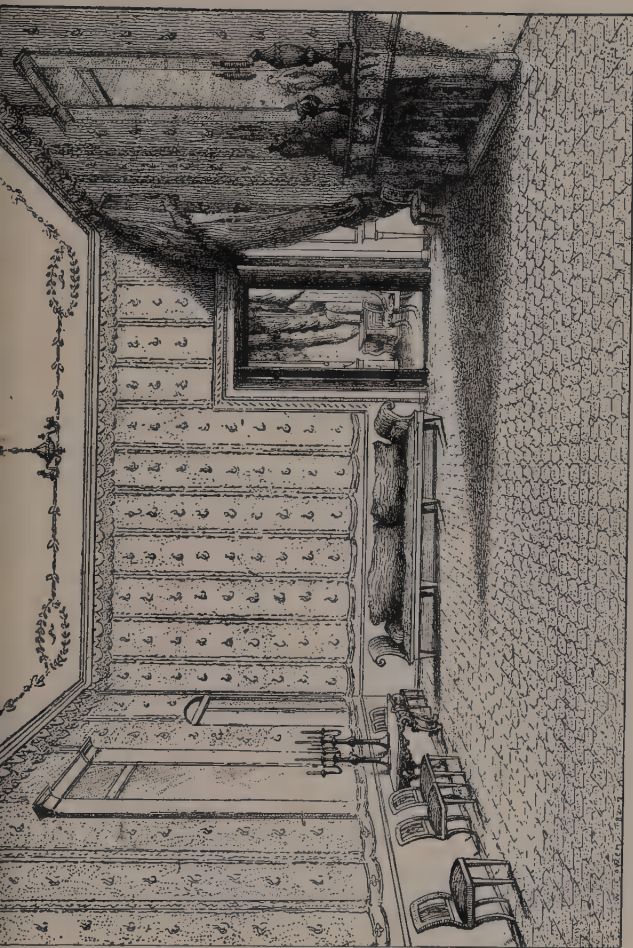
(born 1750; died 1836)

been not unreasonably attributed to his mother's sharing the father's military adventures—where and to what heights would his energies have carried him? Would he have gone East or West, to the Old World or the New, as explorer, coloniser, or pioneer of English progress? Would he have forced fortune to yield him a prize in other lines—in literature, in which he showed a fine quality; in finance, utilising his genius for figures; at the Bar, where he might have made his mark as an impassioned advocate?

These speculations may be unprofitable, but they are somewhat fascinating. It is deeply interesting to consider how nearly Napoleon became a child of the country he afterwards viewed with such persistent and implacable hatred—hatred which after all was neither causeless nor unreasoning. England, it must be remembered, alone defied and defeated him. It was England that shattered his dream of an Eastern empire; English ships that broke his naval power; English subsidies that kept Continental armies in the field against him; an English “General of Sepoys” first sapped

the fabric of his military power. In a word, it was English resistance, English victories over his hitherto invincible troops, that first weighted his soaring wings; English means that dragged him down and completed his overthrow. It was England that flouted and humiliated him most ungenerously, leaving him, the chained and drooping eagle, to eat out his heart on the lonely rock of St Helena.

Authentic accounts of the early years of great men seldom survive; stories told of them are likely to be apocryphal, manufactured in after life, the exaggerations of either sycophants or detractors. We have no very clear knowledge of the young Napoleon. He appears to have exhibited no great precocity. If Madame Junot is to be believed, he once nobly shielded a small sister from the consequences of her misconduct, the theft of fruit from their uncle, the Canon. He bore the blame and took the punishment—to be shut up in a cupboard for three days on starvation diet of bread and cheese—and neither protested nor cried. He was a sturdy child; he might be whipped and would shed tears, but he would never



THE ROOM IN WHICH NAPOLEON WAS BORN

beg pardon. His nurse Saveria, whom he afterwards loaded with gifts and remembered in his will, said that of the thirteen Bonaparte children (eight of whom only survived) Napoleon was the one that gave the least promise of future greatness. He was never a pretty boy, like his brother Joseph. His head was too big for his body; his eyes, a chief charm afterwards, were not noticeable in childhood, nor his smile, that could be so inexpressibly sweet and winning.

We have him brought more clearly before us as his boyhood advanced. At Brienne, which he entered in 1780, he was rather out of his element among a crowd of school-mates, sons of the old noblesse with whom he had little in common; he shunned their society, and was a silent, solitary, serious-minded lad. Bourrienne was one of the few friends he made; attached to him because, as he told him, "You like me; you never laugh at me," for uncouthness, poverty, the jargon he talked. Napoleon's childish reserve was no doubt deepened by the agitations of his childhood. He had breathed an atmosphere of acute political

passion when others at his age played with toys. He brought his ardent patriotism with him to Brienne—his hatred of France. So bitter was his resentment against those who had wronged his beloved Corsica that he burst out into fierce revilings when he saw a portrait of Choiseul at the school. He was morose and discontented at finding himself the butt of richer companions, unable to do as they did; and in a remarkable letter to his father he begs to be allowed to return home if he cannot “have the means of sustaining myself more honourably in the house where I am. . . . No, father . . . take me from Brienne, and make me, if you will, a mechanic.”

The priests who managed Brienne, members of the fraternity of the Minims, were not the most learned teachers, but Napoleon, in the lines that he preferred, was an industrious student. He excelled and was *facile princeps* in mathematics; he read much ancient history, chiefly in Latin authors, the works of Arrian, Polybius, Plutarch, and the Commentaries of Cæsar. He had no taste for languages. As a foreigner he was backward in French;

indeed, on first joining the school, he spoke little more than the Corsican patois, and he was never very fluent then or afterwards in Italian, which he would only speak when forced to do so, often using French words Italianised, with terminations of *i*, *o*, or *a*. The Vice-President, Dupuis, gave him lessons in French, a language he never, however, thoroughly acquired. He could write it with force and accuracy, but some ten years later Madame Junot records that "he spoke French very badly, frequently committing the grossest faults of language." He spelt it abominably always—using, after the Italian fashion, *g*'s for *c*'s, writing "enfin que" "enfant que," and "infanterie" "enfanterie." He studied military topics keenly, and early displayed faculties of command, if we are to believe Bourrienne's story of the snow fortifications erected at Brienne, which, under Napoleon's auspices, were attacked and defended, assaulted and captured by the students commanded by the future conqueror of Europe.

It was at this time recorded of him by his teachers that he was "taciturn, fond of solitude, capricious, haughty, extremely

disposed to egotism, seldom speaking, energetic in his answers, sharp and ready in repartee, full of self-love, ambitious, and of unbounded aspirations." The final report on him by the inspector, Comte de Keralio, was satisfactory. He was said to be "forward in mathematics, tolerably well acquainted with geography and history, had made but little progress in Latin, *belles lettres*, or other accomplishments, bore a good character, would make a good sea-officer, and deserved to be sent to the École Militaire in Paris." He passed on there in due course, arriving in the gay city a true country bumpkin, having all the appearance of a fresh importation, gaping and staring with wonder at everything he saw.

His troubles and annoyances were the same in Paris as at Brienne, but greatly emphasised. The discipline of the higher establishment was easier, and in the license given to the pupils, mostly of the *jeunesse dorée*, free of cash and fond of pleasure, the penniless young Corsican was more than ever dissatisfied. He railed fiercely against the existing *régime*, and drew up a memorial condemning indignantly the idleness and

luxury of the school, which, to his practical mind, were so little in accord with the proper training for a military life. This

Les terrains ou trio peut des minéraux
les matières brute qd
minérales qui composent les
Masse de la terre en 3
grands classes

1^{re} Classe embrasse les
matières qui sont des
produits de la terre primitive
sans pour charge de
nature de la terre pour comprendre
les sables vitreux, les
argiles, les schistes, les
ardoises, etc. etc. etc.
pour abordable.

2^{de} la seconde classe
embrasse les matières qui
ont subi une seconde
action du feu et
qui sont les fougères
par le foudre de l'éclair
l'autre manière ou fondus
par les actions de la
grande chaleur, les
laves, les basalt, les
plumes, pierres, les
magma, etc.

ces classes embrassent les
matières qui sont
plus ou moins de la terre organique.

FACSIMILE OF MEMORANDA MADE BY NAPOLEON ON BOTH SIDES OF A
CARD WHILE ATTENDING LECTURES ON MINERALOGY IN PARIS
BEFORE THE SIEGE OF TOULON

outspoken criticism made him very gener-
ally unpopular in the school, while he was
sharply rebuked by his elders for speaking
so freely when he was only a pensioner
dependent on the King's bounty. He re-

pelled people who would have been kind to him. His pride, the pardonable luxury of a pauper, made him reject readily all offers of pecuniary aid. If we realise that by this time he had felt within him the first awakenings of genius, the intuitive knowledge that he was capable of great things, and as yet had no horizon, no future, we cannot withhold our sympathy from the haughty, hungry, hopelessly ambitious cadet of sixteen.

They were glad to get rid of Bonaparte, the young firebrand, the root-and-branch reformer, from the *École Militaire*. His nomination to the artillery was hurried forward and he became in 1786 a second lieutenant in the regiment of La Fère. He presented rather a ludicrous figure, according to Madame Junot, the first time he came to her mother's house in uniform. His little thin legs seemed buried in his wide top-boots; he was sallow-faced, insignificant, and so awkward in his movements that he was greeted with shouts of laughter. Her little sister christened him "Puss in Boots," and Napoleon took the ridicule in very bad part; indeed, it still rankled in his mind

when he was master of France. Another contemporary picture describes him as ungainly in his person, unprepossessing, diminutive; his only fine feature being his lustrous eyes, which "seemed to gaze deep into futurity, and to read the inmost thoughts of those who conversed with him."

We can follow the young artillery officer from garrison to garrison, from Valence to Lyons, Lyons to Douai, Paris, Auxonne. His fortunes were still narrow. He had to borrow money from a tailor in Paris to get means to join, and even then had to walk part of the way to Valence. His pay was no more than £36 per annum, with £5 a year for lodging, and £8 from the Royal Bounty as a pupil of Brienne. Yet he had to send help to his family, for Charles Bonaparte was dead and had left his wife and family almost in destitution. Napoleon's melancholy grew upon him; he brooded much alone. Despair at the dark future prompted him at Auxonne to contemplate suicide. "Life is a burthen to me, because I enjoy no pleasure," he wrote in a fragment about this time. "In what direction do my thoughts turn to-day? In the direction

of death." A little later he writes: "I have no other resource but in work. I dress myself only once a week" [one wonders how he attended parades and what his superior officers thought of this]. "I go to bed at ten p.m., and rise at four in the morning." He was most assiduous in improving himself. He read every book he could lay his hands upon, some of them half-a-dozen times over. He had dreams now of literary distinction, wrote several brochures, *The Dialogue of Love*, a competition essay on *The Truths that Produce Happiness*, the *Narrative of the Masked Prophet*. He was at work upon a drama, to be called the "Comte d'Essex," and he planned a great and exhaustive history of Corsica.

The first revelation of the true man, the first awakening of his leaping ambition, came with the French Revolution. Napoleon was still a Corsican, a foreigner in the French service, and in the general cataclysm he seemed to see a chance of giving freedom to his native island. It was no doubt one for Corsica and two for himself. Here was an opening to be turned to his own advan-

tage: if he attached himself to Paoli, now back in his own country, he might rise with him, might secure the reversion of his power. So Bonaparte hastened to Ajaccio and offered his services to his father's old friend and leader. Paoli, who greeted the young Napoleon with great cordiality, was much struck with him, with his force of character, his originality, his fiery spirit, with his clearly-marked military aptitudes, and unhesitatingly predicted a great future for him.

Bonaparte now threw himself with great vehemence into the troubled sea of Corsican politics; his aim was to keep in the forefront, to head any and every movement—a bold, unscrupulous intriguer. This youth of little more than twenty soon gave a clear foretaste of his masterful spirit. He was resolved to obtain the command of a newly-raised battalion of national guards, although actually disqualified as an officer of the regular army, and secured it by an act of *vive force*, arresting the commissary charged with the election, who was hostile to him, and following up the outrage with further violence against those who protested. He

espoused, too, the cause of these volunteers in a quarrel with the municipality, and made a daring attempt to seize the citadel of Ajaccio by a *coup de main*. The intervention of the French troops alone saved it. Bonaparte was sent off by Paoli to the centre of the island, where, feeling he had made a mistake, he wrote elaborate excuses to the authorities in Corsica and Paris. At the same time, the French Commandant sent his version, and had the times been less troublous Bonaparte would assuredly have been tried by court-martial.

At this period he was in a state of desertion from the French army. He had been struck off the strength for absence without leave. No very strong sense of discipline existed just then, and officers came and went very much as they pleased. Napoleon Bonaparte since his first return to Corsica had constantly passed backwards and forwards, obtaining leave on some excuse or other, leave, and yet more leave—sometimes, when it suited him, absenting himself without leave. Between his first joining at Valence in 1786 and the end of 1791 he had been away three years

in all. Little notice was taken of this neglect of duty, and his absences brought no penalty until, on January 1, 1792, he was struck off the rolls of his regiment.

Now, after the exploit at Ajaccio, the turbulent young soul, who never forgot the main chance, felt that it was high time for him to make his peace in Paris. He went fortified by letters and certificates that he had been detained in Corsica on duty. The French War Office was too busy to sift evidence ; in too great confusion, having had six different War Ministers in as many months ; too willing, in the general exodus of Royalist officers, to retain whom it could ; and Bonaparte's desertion and late escapade were forgiven. His conduct was strongly condemned, but, after beating the streets of Paris from May till October, he was reinstated in the artillery with the rank of captain. With admirable effrontery he at once demanded another step in rank, on the ground that, although disqualified, he had commanded a battalion in Corsica. This was deemed a little too much, and the presumptuous request was put away with out answer, endorsed " Sans réponse."

He was in sore straits at this time, perhaps the lowest ebb of his fortunes : hard put to it for a meal, often without a sou in his pocket, forced to part with his books and his clothes for subsistence. Bourrienne and he had renewed acquaintance, and were much together. They were in company when the Tuileries was attacked by the mob, saw the insults offered the King, were present at some of the most horrible scenes of the dread revolutionary drama. Bonaparte's sympathies were not with the crowd. He was a man of order. The future autocrat was on the side of authority. At the sack of the palace he cried to Bourrienne : " Why not shoot the *canaille* down ? " But if this was his instinct, his inner belief, outwardly he gave in his adhesion to the revolutionary ideas. He went with the strongest, and what he now saw in Paris changed his views and his plans. He saw at once with his tremendous sagacity that Paris, France, the Revolution offered him a larger field than the parochial politics of his circumscribed Corsica. When he returned, as he did that same winter, he had " ratted." He was the avowed



THE YOUNG ARTILLERY OFFICER
(From a portrait attributed to Prudhon)

enemy now of his compatriots and former friends.

Corsica was now in conflict with the Convention, the French Government of the hour. An effort was made to cajole Paoli into visiting Paris, where his head would have soon fallen ; but he wisely refused to go, and was supported by the people. That once ardent patriot Bonaparte had now to decide on which side he would range himself, and he did not hesitate long. There had been a growing estrangement between him and Paoli, and he had had enough of Corsica. He turned traitor forthwith, and once again secretly planned the seizure of the citadel of Ajaccio on behalf of the French. The plot, despite its astute preparation, failed, and Bonaparte, now utterly discredited, had to fly from the island. He escaped in the disguise of a sailor, and the whole Bonaparte family fled to the mainland ; their house in Ajaccio was plundered and burnt ; they were strangers henceforth in their own country. Napoleon in after years took no thought for the land of his birth. He never revisited the island he pretended to love so passionately :

except in the gift of a drinking fountain, he never remembered or did anything for Corsica.

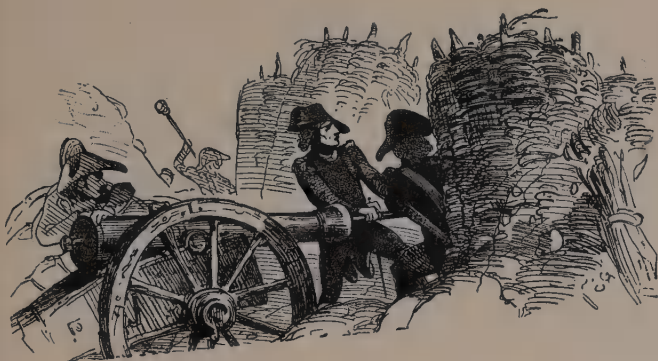
The flight of the Bonapartes has been aptly styled the Napoleonic Hegira. For some time the family dragged on in extreme penury in Marseilles; they were political refugees and would have starved but for the pittance allowed to such as they by the Convention. Caroline, afterwards Queen of Naples, one of the most beautiful, and at the same time most vicious, women of her time, did the work of housemaid. Joseph was a clerk in an oil warehouse, Lucien was a *petit employé*, and Napoleon himself returned to do duty with his regiment. He is said to have been greatly cast down and discouraged. His prospects were *nil*; he was still no more than a captain of artillery engaged in petty business—the suppression of a local rising, the supervision of coast defences. Others of his age and standing were leaping into great fame. Hoche and Marceau commanded armies in the field; Pichegru, his old tutor and future victim, was General-in-Chief of the Army of the North. He alone

lingered on in a subordinate grade, crushed with family responsibilities which, to his credit be it said, he never ignored.

Charles Bonaparte, when dying, had bequeathed to his second son the questionable boon of being the future head of the family. It was the only inheritance he left except that other more positive curse, the cancer of the liver which killed him and also Napoleon. The young man accepted, and strove nobly to acquit himself of the onerous charge. In some of his earlier letters he discusses with quite mature judgment his brother's qualities and fitness for various careers. He will not hear of Joseph's giving up the Church, for which he had been intended, and entering the army, for which he is unsuited. He took the whole charge of his young brother Louis when his own income was a little under a franc a day, lodged him, fed him on the *pot au feu* they concocted together, taught him all he knew. So dire was his poverty at that time, so great his self-denial, that he breakfasted off dry bread, and never entered a café. So now, when a first glint of sunshine came, he was glad that it should

fall on his belongings. He owed it to his strange pamphlet, *Le Souper de Beaucaire*, a defence of the party in power, and of such force and value that it attracted the attention of the younger Robespierre. It was really a new confession of faith, in which the young adventurer gave free vent to his ambitious yearnings, and argued that fate refused nothing to him who made the most of his opportunities.

The author of this brochure was recognised as full of talent and taken in hand. Pecuniary help was given Madame Bonaparte; Joseph was appointed a war commissary, so was "Uncle Fesch," and the appointment meant money-making; Lucien was sent to St. Maximin as a commissary of stores. Napoleon found his first opportunity of military distinction in the happy accident that took him in September 1793 to the Siege of Toulon. He had not quite done with evil fortune, his future was not yet finally assured, but at Toulon he was brought under the notice of Barras, the man who two years later called him in to suppress the Sections, and really laid the foundation of his greatness.



CHAPTER II

HIS FIRST CHANCES—1793-1796



APOLEON, in his personal memoirs dictated at St Helena, says that he was expressly sent by the Committee of Public Safety to command the artillery at the Siege of Toulon. This is one of the many mistakes and misstatements that fill these mendacious records and make them an untrustworthy guide. Las Cases is equally in error when he declares that the choice fell upon Bonaparte because of his excellent

“notes,” kept in the Bureau of Artillery. As a matter of fact, the young Corsican was on his way to rejoin his regiment at Nice, and only turned aside at Toulon to pay his respects to his compatriot Salicetti, who was watching the siege as one of the “Representatives of the people.” Salicetti introduced him to Carteau, a painter by profession, who was masquerading as General in command, and who proudly showed Bonaparte the batteries he had armed against the British fleet. The practical young soldier, scientifically trained, pointed out with scorn that the shot could not reach a third of the distance, and made so many trenchant suggestions that he was then and there “detained” to serve with his arm in the siege.

Thenceforth he practically commanded it, the artillery General, Duteil, surrendering everything into his hands. The fierce energy Bonaparte displayed, backed by consummate skill and knowledge, may be seen from his letter to the War Minister a month later : “Three days after my arrival the army had an artillery. . . . I sent an intelligent officer to Lyons, Grenoble,

Briancon, to draw all that could be useful to me. . . . I requisitioned guns from the Army of Italy . . . and from the Var. . . . I have drawn 100 horses from Marseilles. . . . I have procured eight bronze guns from Martigues. . . . I have established an arsenal at Oulliardes (near Toulon), where eighty blacksmiths and carpenters work without ceasing . . . and a park where gabions, hurdles, fascines are being made." He gets wood to make gun and mortar platforms; has "incendiary projectiles" manufactured; has started a foundry at Ardennes, whence he soon hopes to have supplies of grape and round shot. What he most wanted was powder, and he begs the War Minister to exert himself to send large supplies. All this time Bonaparte stood almost alone; he had to control the arsenal and the batteries, had no *sous-officiers* of artisans, and only fifty gunners, many of them recruits.

We can picture this resolute, far-seeing young soldier at the council of war when the plans of attack sent from Paris were discussed by the assembled Generals and staff. These plans imposed investment

and a regular siege, impossible operations with the force available: yet to resist or vary the execution of the orders received was to court the guillotine; to fail, equally meant death. Only one courageous voice was raised in opposition: Bonaparte stood forth, and urged in clear, convincing language that it was altogether needless to attack Toulon in due form. The key to the situation was the harbour; if that could be made untenable for the enemy's fleet the garrison must withdraw or surrender. It could not afford to lose its only line of retreat. "There!" cried Bonaparte, putting his finger upon a point in the plan which commanded both harbours, "*that* will give you Toulon." Batteries placed there could destroy or drive away the fleet. This vital point was defended by a strong redoubt, which was presently captured by assault, and the issue was as Bonaparte had predicted. The allied fleet carried off the garrison and many of the inhabitants. Toulon was, in fact, evacuated by the troops, and the city left to the tender mercies of the blood-thirsty Republicans.

Bonaparte's immediate reward was the



BONAPARTE

(Painted by J. Guérin)

rank of Brigadier-General of Artillery. He began now to loom large before others ; to have a following, the first members of that devoted circle, men like Marmont, who "saw so much future in his mind," and were ready to attach themselves blindly to his fortunes. He was only twenty-four, but, as he told the Minister who upbraided him with his youth, "People age quickly on the field of battle." He had lived fast in this volcanic epoch, had been tested early, and all illusions, all tenderness had been burnt away in the fierce fire. What remained was ambition, keen and persistent in pursuit of some great aim not clearly understood as yet, but which was to land him high above the general chaos. His temper did not escape the shrewder observers around him. General Schérer reported that he was a first-rate artillery officer, but that he "had too much ambition," was "too much given to intrigue for promotion." Sucy, an old school-fellow, now a war commissary, said that Bonaparte would stop short of nothing but the throne or the scaffold.

He had found a warm supporter in the

younger Robespierre, who thought him "an officer of transcendent merit, although a Corsican." This friendship with a member of that bloodthirsty *régime* nearly involved him in their well-deserved overthrow. After Toulon he had acted with the Army of Italy, and seems to have inspired, although he did not take an active part in, the campaign when Masséna carried the French standards for the first time into Piedmont. Then he had been sent on a special mission to Genoa, ostensibly to demand satisfaction for an outrage upon a French frigate, really and secretly to pave the way to the seizure of the republic. On his return, and while in camp near Nice, he was arrested as a friend of the Robespierres, although the chief charge rested on his recent journey to Genoa. It was pretended most absurdly that he had gone there to betray the French military plans to the enemy. "What else could take him there?" asked his accusers. He knew best what was in the minds of the Convention; he was "their man," their "chief adviser and plan-maker." Had Bonaparte been taken to Paris then, he would certainly have been executed. His

companions in arms knew that, and some of them—Junot, Marmont and others—offered to rescue him and march on Paris. After an imprisonment of thirteen days he was released: a strict scrutiny of his papers had revealed nothing compromising; besides, he had quite cut himself adrift from young Robespierre, whom he had “liked and believed honest,” but whom, “had he been my father, I myself would have stabbed him had he aspired to tyranny.” Brave words, from Bonaparte!

Again fortune frowned. An order reached him suddenly and unexpectedly which transferred him from the south to the west; he was removed from the Army of Italy, in which he had served with increasing distinction, from the large field of the Italian frontier, to a distant command in La Vendée, where he was quite unknown, and would be employed in a petty civil war. He owed this, he believed, to the mean spite of Aubry, a former comrade in the artillery, whom he had passed over, but who was now War Minister. The truer reason was that there were too many Corsicans in that southern army, and it was said of them

that they were better known for their eagerness to make money than their patriotism. But Aubry was no doubt unfriendly to Bonaparte, probably from political antagonism, and he steadily refused to reverse the appointment to the western army. When Bonaparte reached Paris to protest in person, Aubry further embittered his decision by insisting that Bonaparte was too young to have an artillery command, and must be satisfied with that of an infantry brigade. "A great many officers would command a brigade better than I could, few could command the artillery so well," he wrote to the Commissary Sucy. He was quite broken-hearted, and again contemplated suicide. "I shall finish by not getting out of the way of the carriages as they pass." It has been claimed for Napoleon that he was generally above the smaller vices of vindictiveness, and readily forgave injuries, but he suffered Aubry in after years to pine away in the penal settlement of Cayenne when a word would have released him. But the *esprit de corps* of artillery officers was very strong in this day, and Bonaparte

had been bitterly offended by an order to serve away from his own arm.

But he did not go west, although again ordered to report himself forthwith to Hoche at Rennes. He found a complaisant doctor to give him a certificate of ill-health, and he lingered on in Paris, in very straitened circumstances, looking askance at the gay life that surrounded him and yet taking no part in it. Luxury had once more raised her head in the pleasantest capital in the world: carriages filled the streets, the theatres were crowded with fashionable people, especially smart women. If Bonaparte's head was old, his heart was young and passionate; he had a keen eye for beauty. "Women are seen everywhere—at the theatres, in the promenades, in the libraries. In the study of the *savant* you meet very pretty persons. . . . They deserve to hold the helm; therefore, the men are mad about them, think only of them, live only by and for them." "Everything is accumulated in this country to amuse and render life agreeable," he writes to Joseph. Yet, despite the general gaiety, Paris was crippled for want of money; a

terrible financial crisis was imminent; the issue of assignats had destroyed public credit; one golden louis was worth £30. While some lived riotously the masses starved. Even a Brigadier-General, the future Emperor, often went short of a dinner, and was in much distress.

Junot was his faithful and attached companion through this trying period. He was not without means; his friends in the provinces sometimes sent him money, and he invariably shared it with Bonaparte. When he was in funds he sought to increase them at the gaming-table, where he was generally lucky, and if he won they paid off their more pressing debts. Bonaparte's affection for Junot was strong and lasting; he paid him the highest compliment, by saying, "A faithful friend is the true image of God." Sometimes handsome Joseph Bonaparte, who had made a rich marriage by this time, came to his brother's help with a remittance, but the times were hard. The young General went very shabby and out at elbows. Madame Junot describes him as she saw him in 1793, "with a shabby round hat drawn over his forehead, and his

ill-powdered hair hanging over the collar of his grey great-coat . . . without gloves, because they were a useless luxury, with boots ill-made and ill-blackened, with his



GENERAL BONAPARTE

(From a Contemporary Portrait)

thinness and sallow complexion," in marked contrast to what he became a year or two later.

Bonaparte's sick leave expired on July 14, but he obtained an extension till August 5, when he petitioned to be reappointed to

the artillery, from which he had moved when given an infantry brigade. This petition was unfavourably received. On August 16 he was ordered peremptorily to join his command; if his health would not permit him he must be replaced. Now he appealed to Barras and other friends, and he was at last given a place in the Topographical Branch of the War Office by Pontécoulant, the new War Minister. He did admirable work here; it was of a kind for which he was supremely well fitted. It was at this time that his fertile brain turned eastward. The Sublime Porte had asked for French artillery officers to reorganise their service, and Bonaparte put his name forward for a post that appealed to his imagination with its boundless possibilities. He had no great hopes that the Committee of Public Safety would spare him: "Having charged me with the direction of armies and the plans of campaign, which is highly flattering, they will not, I fear, allow me to go to Turkey."

There was no exaggeration in this statement. Bonaparte had actually drawn up for Kellermann and Schérer, then com-

manding in Italy, a scheme of operations so bold and original that these Generals stood aghast. The first called it the work of a lunatic; the second contemptuously asked that the man who conceived it had better put it into execution. This did in effect come to pass. For the plan is very much that of Napoleon's first campaign in 1796, and aimed at the separation and successive overthrow of the two armies opposed to the French. Each had a different mission; the one to cover Piedmont, the other Lombardy, and by a prompt initiative it might be possible to defeat each in turn. After that an advance to the Adige would overawe the States of Venice; while a hand was held out by the Tyrol to the French armies engaged upon the Rhine.

Yet the author of this admirable paper was still in disgrace. On the very day that the Foreign Office reported in favour of his employment by the Grand Turk, his name was formally erased from the list of general officers actively employed. His offence was the old one, that he had failed to take up his command in La Vendée. This blow came from Letourneur, who had succeeded

Pontécoulant at the War Office, and whom Bonaparte had displeased. Nothing worse could well happen to him. This must surely be the end of all his military aspirations; his career was closed, as it seemed. Yet within a week the situation had entirely changed. His chance came—the tide turned, and he was carried on the flood to high fortune.

The history of the 13th Vendémiaire (October 5) is too well known to need detailed description. It was the protest of the people of Paris against the pretensions of the National Convention, which aimed, it was thought, at perpetual power. It had been called into existence merely to make a Constitution, but it had carried on the government since 1792. Now, in 1795, it would not separate without some provision for continuity of government; it had no great faith in the future, fearing an interregnum which might leave room for Royalist plots or popular attempts at reprisals. So it sought to retain a certain power by decreeing that two-thirds of the new Corps Legislatifs created under the Constitution of the Year III.—the two governing bodies,

that is to say, the Ancients and the Five Hundred—should be chosen out of the existing Convention. This was too much for Paris. Its thirty-eight “Sections,” or electoral districts, after tumultuous meetings, broke out into open revolt.

The section Le Péletier, that of the best quarter in Paris, representing the best brains and intelligence, the greatest respectability, the most money, took the lead in openly resisting the Convention. General Menou, a poor creature, was ordered to disarm it, but preferred to treat and argue, agreeing at last to retire if the Sectionnaires would do the same. This was tantamount to victory for the Sections, and the Convention, alarmed, declared itself *en permanence*. Barras was given the supreme command of the troops, after the merits of the various soldiers available, Bonaparte included, had been discussed. He had been at the play, at the Théâtre Feydeau, when the disturbance began, but he had hurried to the National Assembly, where he had the singular fortune of hearing a long debate upon his qualifications.

Barras was appointed; but he was no

soldier, certainly no hero, and he had no intention of risking his skin in any appeal to arms. It was necessary that he should associate himself with some professional



M. N° 36

5 Ventose

vous ne venez plus voir une
 amie qui vous aime vous
 l'avez tout à fait délaissée vous
 avez bien tort car elle vous
 est très vivement attachée,
 venez demain sejourner à Gènes
 avec moi j'ai besoin de vous
 pour et de causer avec vous
 sur vos intérêts
 Bonsoir mon amie je vous
 embrasse

Veuve Beauharnais

De la vente de
 l'arch. Gaeff

lobier 193

REDUCED FACSIMILE OF LETTER FROM JOSEPHINE TO BONAPARTE

man. The story goes that he told Carnot, "I have him, the very man; a little Corsican whom I met at Toulon. He will not stand on ceremony." So Bonaparte was summoned to Barras's house and received his instructions to make head against the

Sections. He accepted the job; he was a mercenary still ready to serve either side, and only the day before he had remarked to Junot, "These Sectionnaires! If they would only let me lead them I would make short work of the Convention!" Now he did his best for the employers that had secured him. The palace of the Tuileries was put in a state of defence; the approaches commanded by artillery. He held the bridges across the Seine, and was thus safe against attack from the south; his main force was massed in the gardens, the representatives, armed, formed a last reserve, and, like a good general, he took especial care to keep open a line of retreat upon St Cloud. These were the sound dispositions that might have been looked for from so practical a soldier.

The forces of the Sections—some 40,000 men, mostly National Guards—were on the move early next day (the 13th Vendémiaire), thinking perhaps to carry the Tuileries by surprise. They found Bonaparte's artillery in position, and, much disquieted, hesitated to attack. The opponents faced each other till late in the afternoon, when the Section-

naires advanced on two lines, one across the Pont Royal, the other by the Rue St Honoré. Both columns broke directly they came under fire. By six p.m. the Convention had triumphed completely; the Sections were overborne and disarmed. It was an easy victory richly rewarded. Bonaparte was at once reinstated in the artillery; he obtained the rank of a General of Division, and was appointed to the command of the Army of the Interior, vacated by Barras.

He had at last broken through the trammels and emerged into daylight. From henceforth he was a different man. He had money now, ample funds; and the first use he made of them was to gather his family together, to fetch his needy relatives from the country and establish them in Paris. His circumstances were altogether changed. He was no longer the plaything of fortune, hanging on the favour of mushroom Ministers, liable at any moment to be disgraced and dismissed, but an officer of rank with an assured position and acknowledged authority. There were no more muddy boots steaming before the fire to offend the

delicate nostrils of Madame Junot's mother with their unsavoury odours. When Bonaparte visited Madame Permon (to whom, though much his senior in years, he had made a proposal of marriage) he wore a brand-new uniform, and was at the head of a glittering staff. He became reserved with his *entourage*, cold, distant, very much the master. He was a person of consequence; he had achieved something, and was on the threshold of greater things.

His ambitious spirit was, of course, concentrated upon securing further advancement. It ought to be well within his reach. He had gained prestige in his small affray with the Sections, had made friends with some powerful people whom he was careful to further propitiate. The post he now occupied, as the military head of the Home District, gave him importance he was not slow to extend. His restless, indefatigable, interfering activity prompted him to take much upon himself within his own province, and yet usurp all the functions of others. He completed the pacification of Paris and reorganised the National Guard; he gave the Directory and the

Corps Legislatifs special body-guards, and he laboured to fill every office under his patronage with his own creatures. Many of these he found useful, and, strange to say, still grateful when he made his bold stroke for sovereign power on the 18th Brumaire. No such project may as yet have taken definite shape even in the fertile brain of this ever-scheming adventurer; but it is certain that already his chiefs, the "five Kings" of the Directory, began to look upon him with suspicion. He could not keep quiet; his restlessness, the obvious outcome of his consuming ambition, could not but be disquieting, even threatening. There was no saying what he might not attempt next, to what lengths he would not go. The upshot of it was a growing anxiety to get him out of the way, to send him off on some distant expedition, to remove him rather than take him boldly by the throat and crush him. This was probably a contributing, if not a principal, cause of his appointment to the command of the army in Italy.

Authorities differ, and various reasons have been assigned for his selection. One

B N^o 178

à vendre

Lebon

Le plus utile organe des
affaires publiques "grâce à la tu-
meur" 2 ans d'âge me permettent pour l'avis de
l'espérance et de la vie, avec une grande popularité par
la confiance de ceux qui m'ont donné - j'en suis sûr -
l'assurance de l'avenir et de la vie et j'en suis sûr
bien plus que l'attente

Bonaparte



De la ville de la Courbe
l'inspecteur Camille

Milleville, 178

FACSIMILE OF ONE OF BONAPARTE'S LETTERS

has gained general credence that he owed the appointment to his timely marriage with Josephine Beauharnais. It is said on the authority of a letter under Josephine's own hand that the command in Italy was Barras's wedding present. There had been close relations between him and Josephine—the very closest according to evil tongues, Barras's own among the number. No doubt the times were lax. Madame Beauharnais was one of a light, loose society that did not practise the most austere virtue. Barras was an undoubted libertine; a low blackguard, too, who boasted of his conquests, and has recorded in his memoirs that Josephine assured him that he was the only man she had ever truly loved. Probably Josephine was more sinned against than sinning—a weak, yielding, rather necessitous, yet extravagant woman, the easy victim of a designing scoundrel like Barras, of whose *salon* she was a principal ornament. But that there was any infamous bargain that Bonaparte should relieve Barras of Josephine at the price of a high military command is to suppose him capable of the most utter

baseness. It is also contrary to a fair conclusion from the known facts of the case.

The appointment was not in Barras's gift. However great his ascendancy in the Directory, he did not alone control the patronage; certainly not for such an important post as the command in Italy. For that the consent of a majority of the five Directors must be obtained. One of these, La Reveillère Lépiaux, plainly asserts in his memoirs that the story of the wedding present is absurd, that Barras had no power to influence the Directory in its choice, nor did he attempt it. It is urged now, and with much plausibility, that Bonaparte's famous scheme of campaign, which the Generals on the spot derided, really gained him the command. When Schérer refused to put it into execution, his recall was decided upon, but not the General to replace him. Several names were put forward: Letourneur was in favour of Bernadotte; Rewbell of Championnet; but Bonaparte was recommended by the other three, and especially by Carnot, who, a scientific soldier himself, had re-



THE FIRST INTERVIEW BETWEEN BONAPARTE AND
JOSEPHINE

(From a Painting by Gervex)

cognised the strong military aptitudes of the young Corsican. Carnot, if this view be correct, certainly deserves his title of "the organiser of victory." Napoleon, who owed him so much, afterwards credited him with being "the most sincere, honest, and indefatigable spirit that figured in the Revolutionary epoch," and it may be added that Jomini, another great authority, has given it as his opinion that "had Carnot been more practised in the field, had he learnt to take a wider view of strategical operations, he might have claimed rank with the great captains of the world."

We may believe, then, that self-seeking of the most shameful kind had nothing to do with Bonaparte's courtship, that it was a romantic, sentimental, although undoubtedly a somewhat sensual affection. He was in love with Josephine from the first moment he met her, whether it was in his own house, according to the fable generally current of her having called to thank him for his kindness to her son, or in one of the many drawing-rooms open to him when he became General commanding the Army of the Interior. He had never yet been much

of a ladies' man; although welcomed at Madame Permon's house, and at home in that most respectable family circle, he had known no ladies of the frothy fashionable type that made up the gayest Parisian society. Josephine Beauharnais must have come like a revelation to the newly-emancipated young man, but just raised above the pressure of poverty and now first admitted to the intimacy of "smart people," as they would be called nowadays. He must have been attracted by her at once. She was an engaging if not an exactly beautiful person; a little *passée* perhaps—for, as a West Indian, she had matured early—but she had the skill to repair the ravages of time. Her complexion was brilliant by night, her chestnut hair was still glossy and did not betray the dye too openly, her rather indifferent teeth were constantly veiled by a fixed, sweet smile. Her chief beauty was her figure, and that was still unimpaired; it was exquisitely proportioned, fell naturally into pretty poses, and was full of the lissom grace of the Creole. She knew how to take the attitudes that were most becoming to her,

and, above all, she could wield with great skill that most potent weapon in the feminine armoury, the art to make the most of herself. She was always delightfully dressed; even now, when almost at the end of her resources, her wardrobe was well filled; by-and-by, in the days of her splendour, she lavished enormous sums on her frocks.

Bonaparte pressed his suit with all the ardour of an enterprising soldier. Since the change in his fortunes he had been eager to marry; he had proposed to Madame Permon, although she was much his senior in years—it is said because he coveted her income; he had paid court to Mdlle. Désirée Clery, his brother Joseph's sister-in-law, a well-dowered, beautiful girl, who afterwards married Bernadotte and became Queen of Sweden. But he cannot have been much in earnest till he met Josephine, and fell at her feet. His love was certainly not immediately returned. The letter already quoted above goes on to admit that her feeling towards him was lukewarm. She could not tell exactly whether she liked or disliked him. "I

admire his courage; the extent of his information, for he speaks equally well on all subjects; the vivacity of his wit, the quick intelligence which enables him to grasp the thoughts of others almost before they are expressed; but I am terrified, I admit, at the empire he seems to exercise over all about him. His keen gaze has an inexplicable something which impresses even our Directors; judge, then, if he is not likely to intimidate a woman. In short, just that which ought to please me, the strength of a passion with which he speaks with an energy that admits no doubt of his sincerity, is precisely that which arrests the consent that often hovers on my lips." It has been said that this very sensible and matter-of-fact letter was either a pure invention or written for historical purposes many years afterwards, but it has rather a genuine ring.

That Bonaparte in the end carried Josephine by storm is very probable. His superb self-confidence imposed upon her. There must be something in the man who promised such great things. "What do I want with protectors? Do my envious

comrades think I cannot get on without? By-and-by they will be glad to accept *my* protection. I have my sword by my side, and will go far with its aid." She admits that this assurance seems ridiculous, and yet she thinks sometimes that "this singular man may really be able to accomplish a part of his pretensions." Her own self-interest no doubt weighed with her in her decision. Madame Beauharnais was a needy woman, almost at her last ebb. Her two children, Eugène and Hortense—one of whom became the chivalrous Viceroy of Italy, faithful among the faithless few, the other, Queen of Holland, that charming woman and most ill-used wife—were at this moment bound to trade, the first to an upholsterer, the second to a *couturière*. When Bonaparte appeared upon the scene she had no resources; she received only a small pittance from her relatives in Martinique; the furniture of her house was pledged; she owed money on every side.

So she accepted this impetuous lover who would not be denied, and two days after the marriage he started for the south. There were two words engraved within the

wedding ring—"To destiny!" What had destiny in store for the strangely-assorted pair? Did Josephine dream that in the crookedness of life this lukewarm feeling which she brought to the matrimonial partnership would recoil on herself; that her vagaries, her heedlessness, the slights she put upon her doting husband, would some day engender like treatment; that Napoleon would pay her in her own coin, with coldness, infidelity, and, finally, with divorce? "The whirligig of Time brings in his revenges," and there was a sad reckoning in store for poor, erring, silly, but yet not unlovable Josephine.



CHAPTER III

HIS DÉBUT AS A GENERAL—1796-1797



HERE was little in the aspect of Bonaparte when on the eve of his first campaign to indicate the great commander. He was still a mere lad, a frail, fragile youth, short in stature, of exceeding slimness, "so thin, indeed, as to inspire pity." "The thinnest and queerest being I ever saw," says a contemporary. But viewed and known more closely, there were signs that he was no ordinary man. His keen, clear eyes pierced like a sword and read people's inmost

thoughts. He imposed his strong personality on everyone at once; his imperious manner, abrupt gestures, authoritative voice, dominated them; his moral grip was firm, tenacious, unrelaxing. He was very much the master; absolute, domineering, dictatorial, determined to be immediately and implicitly obeyed.

It is interesting to note how quickly, yet how quietly, he assumed his position as chief. There were many in the army who resented his appointment; older soldiers, men who had seen more, done more. He was ridiculed as a creature of Barras; a street General, one who had never been in the field, a mere mathematician who made up by boasting for his want of knowledge and experience. On his way south he dined at the table of General Gassendi, and among the guests was a Colonel of Engineers, who wrote to Paris asking "Who was this little braggart who talked of sweeping away the enemy in less than six weeks?" The question was passed on to Carnot, who replied that the little man in question was quite likely to keep his word. The same carping, contemptuous spirit animated the



GENERAL BONAPARTE

(By Appiani)

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officers he was to command. Augereau, till now much his senior, went before him blustering and insubordinate, to leave his presence completely cowed. He confessed the little General terrified him. Masséna admitted that he was awed by the first glance. "That devil of a man fascinates me in a way I cannot account for," said General Vandamme, a coarse old Revolutionary General; "I tremble before him like a child." Lavalette, a relative of Josephine's, records that Bonaparte's regard was so firm and so fixed that "I felt myself turning pale when he spoke to me." No doubt the young man called thus early to high functions realised that he must assume this austere and terrible air if he was to exercise command over others. There was an end now of all familiarity even with old friends. Admiral Decres called on him as he passed through Toulon, expecting to find him the same old comrade, and was put at once in his place. "I was about to rush forward, when the attitude, the look, the tone of the voice arrested me. . . . I never tried again to overstep the line he had drawn between us."

The little *parvenu* General, as some still called him, soon showed his quality. The troops he was sent to command were in rags, half-starved ; he appeals at once to their appetites, securing in advance their most strenuous efforts in a campaign that promised them everything. "Rich provinces and great cities will be in your power ; you will find there (in Italy) honour, glory, and wealth." He preached, in fact, the doctrines of pillage, brigandage, and spoliation, which, by his surprising victories, he was so soon able to put into effect. The old fine theories of the French Revolution were now cast completely to the winds. This new leader of the soldiers of the Republic no longer made pretence of extending the immortal principles of liberty and fraternity ; Italy was not held up to them as a country to be freed, but as a prey to be seized and plundered.

Bonaparte carried with him detailed instructions from the Directory as to his plan of campaign. It was in a measure his own plan ; but it stopped short of what, with his consummate military judgment, he knew was necessary for perfect success. The

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Directory desired him to cross the Apennines, separate the two armies opposed to him, the Piedmontese and the Austrian, force the first back on Turin, and then, by an advance upon Milan, drive the second out of Lombardy. As to the early operations, Bonaparte was in accord with his masters, but he saw clearly that the last part of the scheme was strategically wrong. It would be unsafe to leave the Piedmontese in his rear, unless they had been first utterly crushed. Moreover Genoa was all but openly hostile, and in the move on Lombardy would have threatened his right flank. We shall soon see that the young General was not to be tied by his orders, least of all by those he knew to be faulty and involving great risk.

The allied forces outnumbered those of the French. Colli, the Piedmontese General, commanded 20,000 men; Beaulieu, the Austrian, had nearly 40,000. But the superiority in numbers was counterbalanced by the independent *rôle* each was called upon to fulfil. Each had to cover its own territory with bases widely apart and divergent lines of communication, for Colli

on Turin, and for Beaulieu on Milan and the Tyrol. The very nature of these inevitable positions greatly militated against united action. The French army, on the other hand, although smaller, was more compactly held. It numbered no more than 36,000 or 38,000 men, according to the best accounts. But although in poor case as regards supplies and munitions of war, they were hardy, well-seasoned troops, who had been campaigning for three years; full of enthusiasm, eager to descend from the bleak mountains into the fertile plains of Italy; led by many excellent officers, some good Generals who became more famous under Napoleon, and many others still in junior ranks, such as Junot, Murat, Marmont, Lannes, Victor, Suchet, and Berthier — men whose names are indissolubly associated with their chief's glory.

Bonaparte's great aim was to strike in between the allied armies, very much as he did twenty years later in the campaign of Waterloo, the positions of Wellington and Blücher having in some respect repeated those of Colli and Beaulieu in 1796. This

would give him the advantage of "interior lines," a term in military science indicating a central position from which a General can move by the radius, by the shortest line, in fact, against enemies who can only act and communicate by the circumference.

At the opening of the campaign the Allies held their principal strength at the extremities of this long line. On their right, Colli was chiefly about Ceva, opposite the Pass of Ormea; on their left, Beaulieu was at Voltaggio, Ovada, and Sassello, and reaching through the Bochetta Pass towards Genoa and the sea-coast. The Austrian centre was but weakly held, mostly about Dego, where d'Argenteau was in touch with the Piedmontese under Provera at Millesimo.

The French, when Bonaparte assumed command, occupied the whole length of the Eastern Riviera from Voltri, near Genoa, back to the passes above Nice, as follows:—

1. Laharpe, on the left, 8000 men, at Savona with the brigade of Cervoni pushed forward to Voltri.

2. The centre was made up of Masséna,

8000, at Cadibona, and Augereau, 8000, at San Giacomo.

3. To the right, Serrurier, 7000, held the Pass of Ormea, and beyond him two divisions, Macquart's and Garnier's, watched the Col di Tenda.

It was Bonaparte's intention to force the Austrian centre, drawing together and concentrating the three divisions—Laharpe's, Masséna's, and Augereau's—for the purpose, while the Passes of Ormea and the Col di Tenda were securely held by his other divisions on the left.

It will be interesting to describe this, Bonaparte's first independent campaign, in some detail. It so well illustrates his methods and his native genius for war, that it may be taken as typical of much that was to follow.

April 10. Beaulieu, in obedience to orders from the Aulic Council in Vienna, took the offensive, advancing in person against Cervoni, who stood firm at Voltri till the night of the 11th, then fell back on Laharpe. At the same time the Austrian General, d'Argenteau, was to march by Montenotte on Savona. The effect of these

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moves, as Beaulieu hoped, would be to envelop and cut off Laharpe.

April 11. D'Argenteau's advance was checked by the gallant stand made by a small force under Colonel Rampon. He fought all day, but made no impression, and paused at sundown, meaning to renew the attack on the morrow; but that night his fate was sealed. Now, Bonaparte's masterly strategy, well seconded by the activity and rapid marching of his troops, concentrated three divisions, 24,000, on d'Argenteau's force of 10,000, and all but destroyed it.

It was a fine example of the great military maxim to bring superior masses upon an enemy's fractions. On the night of the 11th, Laharpe took post behind the redoubt above mentioned; Masséna marched by Cairo on Sassello, where he turned to take d'Argenteau in flank and rear; Augereau also moved on Cairo to interpose between the Piedmontese, then reinforce Masséna.

April 12. D'Argenteau was attacked in force and dispersed.

April 13. Beaulieu learned what had

happened, and tried to concentrate his remaining forces on Dego. On this day Augereau and Masséna, combined, turned on the Piedmontese, defeated them at Millesimo, and drove them back on Ceva, Provera's division being made prisoners.

April 14. Bonaparte attacked Beaulieu and beat him at Dego, obliging him to retire on Acqui, thus hopelessly widening the distance between the Allies, who were now completely separated. In four days' fighting he had secured the great object of the campaign; his two opponents were falling back in opposite directions, and he was in between, master of both roads, able and ready to attack by either line.

The Directory's orders had been, if he reached this point, to leave the Piedmontese, and turn all his attention upon the Austrians. The conclusive military arguments against this step have already been given, and Bonaparte, counting on the pardon that would surely be accorded to fresh triumphs, chose the right course, which was first to overwhelm the Piedmontese. Laharpe was posted at San Benedetto to repel any relieving movement by the



BONAPARTE AT THE BRIDGE OF ARCOLA

(From a Picture by Baron Gros in the Louvre)

Austrians. Bonaparte then drew Serrurier to him from Garessio, and pressed the Piedmontese home. Their army, evacuating the entrenched camp of Ceva, fell back on Mondovi, where, on the 21st April, Bonaparte won another battle. On the 23rd Colli asked for an armistice, which was sternly refused. On the 25th, Bonaparte, advancing unopposed, was at Cherasco, within thirty miles of Turin.

This whirlwind of victory produced consternation in the city, and pressure was put upon the King to make peace. Not that his case was at all desperate. Turin could have stood a siege; the Piedmontese army was still strong—it had a numerous artillery and first-rate cavalry. But terror carried the day, and the country surrendered at discretion, gave up its fortresses and its roads, reduced its army, and discharged the militia. Bonaparte profited more than by actual conquest, which might have been arduous and prolonged. Yet he had been expressly forbidden to treat with sovereign powers, and he had to excuse himself to the Directory. He did so by urging that, although his colleagues, his fellow Generals,

and the Civil Commissioners approved of the suspension of arms, the agreement could be cancelled by the Government if they chose. At the same time, he quietly adds that he has gone in pursuit of Beaulieu, and hopes soon to enter the Tyrol and lend a hand to the armies on the Rhine.

Let us follow his conquering course, leaving aside for the moment the grave considerations raised by his conduct in this first revelation of himself: his defiance of the Directory, his astute bids for popularity in France and with the army, his exactions and oppressions of the subject peoples on whom he laid his heavy hand. The campaign so happily ended had lasted but eighteen days—from the 10th to the 28th April. Within a week he was again in the field, marching on Piacenza, where he crossed the Po. Beaulieu looked for him higher up, at Valenza, mainly because permission to cross there was expressly demanded in the treaty with Piedmont. But at Piacenza he turned the lines of the Ticino and the Po, thus compromising Beaulieu's position at Milan, who now fell back behind the Adda. Here Bonaparte

came upon the enemy at Lodi, where he forced a passage in a brilliant feat of arms, a victory cheaply earned, which yet completely demoralised the Austrians. Beaulieu having abandoned Milan and withdrawn behind the Mincio, Bonaparte entered the capital, and Lombardy became the prize of another short week's successful campaigning.

There could be no question of the commanding talents that with magical rapidity scored such triumphs as these. Bonaparte established his right to be deemed a great soldier from this, the outset of his career. He possessed, indeed, the highest attributes of leadership, and in the most pronounced degree: a profound insight into the true and really unchanging principles of warfare, sound strategical judgment in choosing his plan of campaign, extraordinary force and promptitude in striking decisive blows. His personal ascendancy was marvellous; no General has excelled him in appealing to the imagination of his troops, in winning their unhesitating devotion. No one knew better, and yet almost instinctively, how to evoke their heroism, how to rouse them to

the finest efforts. He could play upon their best feelings ; more, he showed himself freely, and appeared to take keen personal interest in every unit, every individual—their doings, their achievements ; he knew every regiment and its exploits ; recognised and rewarded merit on the spot. Mixing with the troops continually, sharing their toils, their bivouacs, their dangers, he became one with them, comrade as well as leader, the beloved “Petit Caporal,” who asked none to go where he would not lead the way—a way that ended always in victory. He soon showed that he could keep his promises. His proclamations were not empty bombast. Italy was to be their reward, and it soon was. He showed them the rich plains, the great cities that studded them, offering them as prizes, which with astonishing completeness he quickly put at their disposal. The surest road to the hearts of the soldiery of any time or country is along a series of unbroken military successes. The victorious General can always count upon the boundless enthusiasm of his followers. But Bonaparte held the allegiance of his by more

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than the high-sounding but often empty bribe of military glory. His gifts were more substantial, more material. What his men captured he allowed them (at least for a time) to enjoy. That he had evoked and fostered a spirit of greed, a lust for rapine and bloodshed that could only be satisfied by shameful excesses, is the chief blot upon his fame in this first invasion of Italy ; and he was himself, although for the State and not for personal aggrandisement, the biggest brigand of them all.

Very early in the campaign he saw his mistake, and, although the blame was his, strove with great severity to correct it. The scenes of pillage and spoliation, he wrote to the Directory, made him "blush to be a man." "I will restore order, or I must cease to command these thieves." So officers were broken, soldiers shot, but the pillage did not cease ; only it was carried on now by the General-in-Chief, systematised and regulated, and on a very much wider scale. Tremendous war-taxes and indemnities were levied on the hapless Italian people. Sardinia gave up her fortresses, and was plundered by the War

Commissaries of supplies and munitions of war. From others he took hard cash. From Genoa he took fifteen millions of francs; from Austrian Lombardy twenty millions, with large subsidies in horses, clothing and supplies; from Modena ten millions; from Parma several more; from Rome later on twenty-one millions, and so on. They might rise in revolt against these iniquitous exactions—so much the worse for them. The inhabitants of Lombardy, relieved from foreign domination, welcomed the French as deliverers, and, being soon undeceived, were rash enough to fly to arms in protest. At Pavia an insurrection was suppressed under circumstances of the utmost cruelty. Everyone taken with arms in his hands was shot; every house in which weapons were found was burned. Four hundred hostages chosen from among the first families of Lombardy were exiled to France. Such high-handed proceedings were sufficient to change, within one short week, all friendly sentiments into deep-seated, undying hate.

The French “loot” in Italy comprised

all sorts of valuables, jewellery, gold and silver plate, church ornaments, priceless works of art, pictures and statuary, the inherited glory of the cradle of the Arts. This last, a shameful abuse of the right of conquest never hitherto practised by civilised nations, the French had already tried in Holland and Belgium; but Bonaparte now carried it to its furthest limits. As early as May 1, three weeks after the opening of the campaign, he instructed the French Minister at Genoa to provide him with detailed lists of the chief works of art to be found in the great Italian cities. A few days later he writes to Carnot: "I send you twenty pictures by the first masters—Correggio and Michael Angelo." At the same time he asks the Directory to let him have three or four well-known artists who could be usefully employed in choosing the most suitable pictures and objects of vertu to be forwarded to Paris. On May 19 it is ordered that an agent shall be attached to the French Army in Italy "to extract and send home the objects of art and science found in the conquered towns or recorded by the powers

in virtue of treaties or suspensions of arms." Again, in June, he reports that Monge, Berthollet and Thouin are at Pavia, where "they are busy enriching our Jardin des Plantes and Cabinets of Natural History." "I imagine they will not forget a complete collection of serpents, which seemed to me worthy of making the voyage." He promises them an abundant harvest in Bologna. On July 2 he writes: "Eighty waggons left yesterday laden with hemp and silk," the former with much timber was for use in the shipbuilding yards of the Republic; "I am collecting all the jewels and silver plate at Tortona. . . . We are much embarrassed as to what to select at Rome. The statues can only be transported by sea, and it would be dangerous to trust them on board ship." For Nelson was in command of the Mediterranean.

The man who could fill the empty coffers of France with such timely contributions was in a position to laugh at the Directory when they dared to take him to task. At first they resented his masterfulness, his insolence in defying their orders, and, more

than ever jealous of him, were resolved to clip his wings by dividing the Italian command. Four days after Lodi (May 14) he received this news in a dispatch, which gave one half, to be called the Army of Lombardy, to Kellermann, and ordered Bonaparte, with the other, to march by the coast on Leghorn, Rome, and Tuscany. The young General would brook no equal; his answer, in firm but respectful language, was to place his resignation in the hands of his chiefs. Unity of command was indispensable to success in war. "A single general is not only necessary, it is essential . . . I should have done nothing of value if I had been obliged to reconcile my plans with those of another . . . my action has been as quick as my thought." But he must be untrammelled; if Government Commissioners have the right to be consulted, if they can change his movements and give or take troops from him, "expect no more of any value." He tells the Directory they must have a General who possesses their entire confidence. "If it is not I, I am sorry for it, but I shall redouble my zeal in the post you confide to me."

“Kellermann,” he writes the same day to Carnot, “will command the army as well as I can . . . but I think that to join him and me in Italy would be to sacrifice everything. I cannot willingly serve with a man who believes himself the first General in Europe ; besides, I consider that one bad General is better than two good ones.”

As these protests were accompanied with the news of the occupation of Lombardy, and the promises, soon fulfilled, of large consignments in specie and valuable goods, the Directory thought twice before they dispossessed so useful, albeit so alarmingly insubordinate, a lieutenant. A fortnight later they had reconsidered their proposal ; had withdrawn their orders to attack Rome and Naples ; had left Bonaparte practically a free hand. He had probably counted upon this ; he knew that he was too strong to be trifled with, that he wielded almost independent authority ; that the Government, or its representatives, could not control his policy. As he told Miot de Melito, “I do what I please.” As regards immediate advantage, the wisdom of giving him *carte blanche* was soon

apparent. He was not to be diverted from the true line. It was of the first importance to overthrow the power of Austria in Italy. After that the smaller States might be easily dealt with.

The operations that followed were of the same prompt and decisive character, based upon the same masterly and unerring comprehension of the true elements of success in war. Nor did Bonaparte hesitate to set international law at defiance, and, when it suited his plans, to violate the neutrality of Venice. Beaulieu now held the line of the Mincio and the fortress of Mantua, the last Austrian stronghold in Italy. Bonaparte threw his left forward and occupied Brescia, on Venetian territory, aiming, as it seemed, at Beaulieu's retreat into the Tyrol. That General then retaliated by seizing Peschiera, also on Venetian territory, which would strengthen his line of defence; his left being at Mantua, his right now at Peschiera, his centre at Borghetto. Bonaparte, making a feint against the Austrian right, drew hither the bulk of Beaulieu's army, and, by an astonishing night march, put in practice one of his favourite devices—that

of falling like a thunderbolt upon the weakened centre — broke through, and fairly drove Beaulieu out of Italy. After that the French were able to seize the line of the Adige, a still further violation of Venetian neutrality; but it was the strongest line of defence to the northward, and when in possession of it, Bonaparte was safe to turn back and dispose of the rest of Italy.

Naples now made submission; the Pope essayed to treat, and was permitted to buy peace, although the Directory had forbidden Bonaparte to make any concessions to either Power. Only one sovereign State remained independent of France, and that was Tuscany, whose Grand Duke was on friendly terms with the Directory. But Tuscany was weak, and it owned Leghorn, a prosperous port full of British shipping, all laden with rich freights, as it was supposed. A French division now marched through Pistoja, ostensibly moving on Rome; it took the route by Sienna instead of Florence, at the earnest request of the Grand Duke; but turned suddenly on Leghorn and seized it. The booty was dis-

appointing: the British ships, warned in time, had gone to sea. But Tuscany was at the mercy of France, and now, the citadel of Milan having fallen, Italy was entirely at the mercy of Bonaparte.

Austria was by no means content to surrender the Italian possessions, and gave Bonaparte constant occupation in meeting her repeated and well-sustained efforts to succour Mantua, which held out, indeed, until February 1797. The first attempt was made by General Wurmser, an old General distinguished on the Rhine, who burst through the Tyrol with an army of 70,000 men. He advanced on three lines widely apart, and thus offered himself to be beaten in detail by the superior strategy of his enterprising foe. Bonaparte's situation might easily have become desperate; but he broke up instantly from before Mantua, sacrificing his siege train, and carried his whole army to attack the first Austrian column, that under Quasdanowich, which was striking at his most vital point—his communications with Milan. He caught up Quasdanowich, and overwhelmed him at Lonato before the other two Austrian

corps could reach and reinforce him. Wurmser, who was bringing them up a little tardily, was next encountered and beaten at Castiglione: but for the fatigue of the French troops the Austrian army would have been annihilated. Wurmser escaped into the Tyrol, and presently re-entering Italy by the valley of the Brenta, was again defeated at Bassano, after which, with his shattered forces, he retreated into Mantua. The relief of this stronghold was the sole advantage obtained by Austria in this campaign. By October 1796 another Austrian army, 50,000 strong, largely composed of recruits, was assembled, and Italy was again invaded. Alvinzi, with 40,000, was on the Piave about Belluno; Davidowich, with 18,000, advanced through the Tyrol; and the two were to unite before Verona. Bonaparte was now superior in numbers; he had received reinforcements; and the creation of the Italian legions had released the French garrisons in the conquered fortresses. Yet in this campaign the tide of fortune almost turned. At the first onset he met and defeated Alvinzi between Vicenza and Bassano, but

Davidowich had pressed back the French force from Trent, and, threatening to take the line of the Adige in reverse, would have cut off Bonaparte's retreat. He abandoned, therefore, the advantage gained over Alvinzi, and hastily retired to save his communications. After that he concentrated at Verona, where Alvinzi had followed, and was in an entrenched position upon the heights of Caldiero. Bonaparte attacked them, and was repulsed. Now, for the first time in Italy, he was in grave peril. His rear was not safe, the garrison of Mantua harassed him with fierce sorties, Alvinzi in front threatened to enclose and besiege him in Verona.

He met his danger with a bold stroke. Evacuating Verona during the night, he carried his main army to Ronco, far down the Adige, where he took Alvinzi in the rear and nullified the entrenchments of Caldiero. Then followed the three days' fighting at the bridge of Arcola, over the Alpone, a small tributary of the Adige. Here the enemy had thrown up a bridge-head, and held it so tenaciously that Alvinzi was enabled to retreat from Caldiero.

Next day Bonaparte, seeming to retreat, drew the Austrians down on him, and engaged them to their disadvantage. The third day he attacked and beat them at Arcola, but in an action long and hotly contested. At last Alvinzi was driven back. Davidowich, on the other hand, had gained a success on the side of Trent, but having too long delayed his attack instead of compromising Bonaparte in his advanced position, he was compelled to fall back into the Tyrol. It is said that the happy issue of this nearly adverse campaign first confirmed Bonaparte in the opinion, so often afterwards expressed, that he had been born under a lucky star.

Still, Austria showed surprising vitality and renewed the contest the following year. Early in January Alvinzi was entrusted with a new invasion. He was to advance now by the valley of the Trent with the main army, while a strong demonstration by a smaller force was to distract Bonaparte's attention on the Lower Adige, aiming at the relief of Mantua. Bonaparte was in some doubt which was the true line of attack, but he had himself concentrated

at Verona, midway between the two, till certain news reached him that Alvinzi's was the principal danger. All the available French divisions were directed upon Rivoli, where Alvinzi, thinking that he had only one—that of Joubert—before him, brought on the battle of Rivoli, and was almost destroyed. Meanwhile, upon the other line, Mantua had been relieved, but Bonaparte flew back, and fought another successful engagement. In the end, Mantua surrendered.

Last of all, the French became the aggressors, and carried the war across the Austrian frontier. Bonaparte, in the campaign of 1797, aimed at Vienna, the very heart of the Empire. Once more Austria gathered together her forces, and entrusted them to the Archduke Charles, her best General, who had but just triumphed over Moreau and Jourdan in a series of masterly movements on the Rhine. Had the Archduke followed his own genius he would have held the Tyrol, but he was ordered to cover Trieste. Bonaparte, despite the winter snows, took the straightest road to Vienna, through Carinthia and Styria, and meeting

the Archduke *en route*, dislodged him successively from the lines of the Tagliamento and the Isonzo. He held on as far as Leoben, where he agreed to an armistice, and the preliminaries to the peace of Leoben, or, more exactly, of Campo Formio, were signed. Except for the shameful spoliation of Venice, his work was over.

In all this the man has been obscured by, swallowed up in, the victorious General. But he was already more than the brilliantly-successful soldier. The little *parvenu* Corsican, with no heritage but his sword, had used it to such good purpose that within one short year he had become the arbiter of nations, holding the fate of princes and peoples in the hollow of his hand. He was now a power to reckon with, respected with a holy horror throughout Europe, a new force that might carry all before it. "I am only just beginning," he whispered to his devoted Junot. Every day a new horizon opened before him, and he hardly knew where and how far he might go. It may be that ideas of sovereign power had not taken definite shape, but he was greatly pleased when the Milanese lady told him



TRIUMPHAL ENTRY OF THE FRENCH INTO VENICE, MAY 1797

she had dreamt he was King of Italy. Seeing that a full year later he sought to carve out an empire for himself in the Far East, he can hardly have hoped, as yet, to become the master of France.

But he had already set himself up to defy the Directory, for whom his contempt was unmeasured, as seen in his words and deeds: "Do you think I triumph in Italy to benefit those lawyers in Paris?" he asked derisively. He arrogated complete independence, claimed to act as a dictator, usurping functions the Directory never meant he should exercise. His supremacy was shown in his treating direct with sovereign Powers: in his formation, *proprio motu*, of the Cispadane Republic; in his first ignoring, then thwarting, at last making subservient to his will, the Political Officer, General Clarke, whom the Directory sent to control his proceedings. Whatever ambitious projects were now incubating in his capacious brain, they were certainly far beyond the consolidation of the French Republic. He saw no sufficient prize for himself in that. He openly declared that a Republican form of Government was unsuited to the French

people. "They want a chief—a chief crowned with glory," he often said; a man, in short, like himself, who would gratify their pride, but, leaving them only empty puppets to play with, would wield absolute authority. It is absurd to suppose that even in Italy he had not already calculated the chances of winning supreme power.

As his influence grew, so did his importance and the State he kept up. His Court at Milan was semi-regal in its outward forms and observances. Bourrienne, who now joined him, found him "great and powerful, surrounded with homage and glory." The old friend made no attempt to raise the barrier, to claim any equality; he kept a discreet distance from his chief, and gave up the familiar "thee" and "thou." Yet in private life Bonaparte lived simply, with a perhaps studied austerity of morals and demeanour. He was anxious, a little late in the day, to remedy the evils he had himself called into existence—the systematic plunder and spoliation that so long prevailed. We find him refusing with all the indignation of outraged virtue the special gift offered him by the Duke of Modena. Salicetti had

strongly urged him to accept these four millions of francs. "Thank you," said Bonaparte, "but I am not going to sell myself for that sum." No doubt, had he chosen, he might have amassed a gigantic fortune in Italy. Everyone about him did so, often by his advice, for he soon laughed away the scrupulousness of some, the *fleur de délicatesse* that kept them from filling their pockets. His own share was said to be no more than £120,000, of which he brought less than half back to Paris. A great portion of this, if we are to believe Bourrienne, was derived from the quick-silver mines of Idria, which he seized in his advance through Carniola against the Archduke Charles.

Yet one gathering sore rankled constantly in his heart, embittering all his triumphs. We have seen how the young bridegroom tore himself from his wife's arms; how, amid all the anxieties and distractions of his command, his first and last thought was for Josephine. His love-letters from Italy are models of impassioned eloquence. "Any woman," says prudish Madame de Rémusat, "would have been proud to receive them."

Yet Josephine scarcely answered them. Again and again he implored her to come out and join him. The gay Creole much preferred Paris and its round of gaieties; the incense poured before her as "Madame



GENERAL BONAPARTE

(Taken on his Return from Italy by Guérin)

Bonaparte," the enthusiastic cheers of the populace when she appeared in the streets, the gratifying nickname of "Notre Dame des Victoires." She invented all sorts of excuses to postpone departure: pretended to be *enceinte*; to be too ill to travel. Then Junot came on the scene, having brought

HIS DÉBUT AS A GENERAL III

trophies to lay before the Directory. And Josephine was afraid to let him return to Italy without her. Bonaparte received her with transports which were but coldly returned. One short week of bliss and



MADAME BONAPARTE

they were again separated. The General hurried off to fight Beaulieu ; when he flew back to his wife, he missed her—she had gone without notice, and on some small pleasure jaunt, to Genoa.

Soon, in the frequent absences of Bonaparte, another and more serious cause of

indifference arose to sap his happiness. Whether Josephine was worse than frivolous may never be definitely decided, but she certainly was an arrant flirt. The General-in-Chief had rivals, chief among them a gallant young hussar, Hippolyte Charles, General Le Clerc's aide-de-camp; "an amusing youth," according to the chroniclers of the time, for whom Josephine is said to have had an especial *tendresse*. This episode was possibly exaggerated to her disadvantage, for we know that Josephine was detested and much maligned by Bonaparte's family; but the affair ended in his expulsion of Charles from the Army of Italy. Bonaparte was, in truth, jealous of everyone at that time.

This ardent love began to abate in Italy under the shocks of indifference, if not positive ill-usage. We may see the growing change in the altered tone of the correspondence which still flowed from the camp to the Court when they were parted by active service. It is asserted by some writers that Bonaparte was tempted by the proofs of his wife's unworthiness to put her away from him, but that he dreaded the outburst of

ridicule that would overwhelm the “conquering spirit,” and preferred to wash his dirty linen at home. Here, again, there is probably exaggeration. Napoleon, whatever cause of complaint he may have had against her, never lost his attachment to Josephine. They agreed to differ; he went his own way, and was, as we know, involved in many serious *affaires de cœur*, but he liked his wife to the very last. He was, indeed, as all his actions proved, constant in his affections to his own belongings. His munificent kindness to his own family is one of the best and most saving traits in his character.



CHAPTER IV

ORIENTAL DREAMS—1797-1799



ANY complex causes contributed to the French invasion of Egypt in 1798. It was not a new idea. Leibnitz had suggested it to Louis XIV.; the proposal had been revived in a later reign; an ambitious Frenchman, Magalon, Consul in Alexandria, had put a scheme for the occupation before the Directory. But the conception of vast conquest and the creation of a new empire in the East was Bonaparte's; it was characteristic of



GENERAL BONAPARTE
(From a Medallion by David)

his genius, so exactly calculating and stern, that it had yet its romantic and imaginative side, and he was led at times, to his own undoing, into wild and extravagant dreams. The glamour of the East possessed him; it had been his earliest ambition to seek fortune there; it still attracted him as a field of limitless adventure. He told Madame de Rémusat long afterwards that he aimed at becoming a new Mahomet; he was to create a new religion, to be the ruler and law-giver. "I saw myself in Asia, riding an elephant, wearing a turban, and holding in my hand a new Koran, written by myself." A fresh impulse in this direction was given by the seizure of the Ionian Islands. This was the true point of departure for his Oriental policy; that vast project that dwarfed the conquest of Italy into nothingness. "I would rather give up Italy," he said "than not have gained these islands." They were of the utmost importance to his plans for the dispossession of the Turk, the base from which he might strike a mortal blow at England's growing power in the East. The Ionian Islands gave France a firm footing in the Levant;

the next step essential to the further development of his scheme was the capture of Egypt.

All this was put forward in the summer of 1797. But other more pressing matters occupied him for the moment to the exclusion of these far-fetched fantastic views. He was now the uncrowned King of Italy, without the name but with the reality of supreme power ; he had assumed sovereign state, with all the splendour of a Court—a gorgeous ceremonial, surrounded by suppliant Princes ; the head of society, a new Mæcenas, encouraging arts, science and literature ; the cynosure of every eye. He dined in public, and the crowd was permitted to see him eat, this powerful *parvenu* thus aping the customs of the old dethroned royalty. All the threads of government were in his hands : the higher administration of the Cisalpine Republic, his own creation ; the settlement of Genoa and Venice, now seized, fraudulently and burglariously ; the negotiations for peace with Austria. He was more than ever defiant of the Directory, arrogating independence, indignantly repudiating interference or control ; any criti-

cism of his proceedings was an unpardonable outrage. When Dumoulard, a national representative, presumed to condemn the high-handed treatment that enslaved Italy, he retorted with the bitterest invective, and, as usual, sent in his resignation.

This attack, however, ranged him on the side of the Directory in the coming conflict with the party that aimed at more settled government, some of whom, with that end in view, would have brought about a Bourbon restoration. The army naturally sided with the Directory, for it had nothing to gain, everything to lose, by the return of the old *régime*. No doubt Bonaparte fostered this spirit in the troops he commanded, and inspired the addresses of support promised the Directory by the Army of Italy. It was he who sent Augereau, a brutal and unscrupulous soldier, to execute the *coup d'état* of Fructidor, for which the pure-minded and upright Hoche had been intended, but who, after having been misled, failed, and was discarded. Bonaparte kept an emissary of his own in Paris to watch events on his behalf—Lavalette, an aide-de-camp and devoted adherent, whose warnings

soon changed his chief's attitude. A closer grip of the situation persuaded Bonaparte that he had better stand aloof from the Directory, leaving them to bear the odium, while he reaped later on the advantages of the *coup d'état*. The man who could most effectually control the army must in due course benefit by the acceptance of brute force, of armed strength as the only law of the land.

So he held aloof, and abstained from expressing his approval of the sorry victory he had helped to prepare. His silence greatly offended his nominal masters, and they were not appeased by the lukewarm congratulations he tardily forwarded. The estrangement was widened by their keen dissatisfaction with the Treaty of Campo Formio, which he had presumed to conclude with Austria according to his own ideas, and ignoring his instructions. He was now for peace, not war, and was willing to hand over Venice, poor helpless victim of his dishonourable rapacity, as a bribe to Austria in exchange for the Rhine frontier and that of the Adige. The Directory insisted on much harder terms, distinctly forbidding the cession of Venice,

and making war the alternative. Bonaparte preferred to make peace. " Venice shall pay expenses, and the advocates in Paris may say what they please." But the terms for which he contended were not really accepted by the Austrian envoy Cobentzel, and it was on this occasion that the famous incident of the porcelain vase occurred. Bonaparte, to gain his object, still threatened war, and with increasing fierceness ; but Cobentzel was firm and unyielding. Every moment's delay brought the arrival of fresh injunctions from Paris nearer and nearer ; the business must be settled ; and to hasten it Bonaparte flew into one of those passions he could simulate at will. He rose in the midst of the conference, and, seizing a priceless vase, the gift of the Empress Catherine to Cobentzel, he dashed it to pieces upon the floor, and rushed out of the room crying, " That is how I will break your Monarchy !" Next day the treaty was signed ; the same day express orders arrived that would have made its conclusion impossible. The Directory told Bonaparte they would relieve him of the labours of negotiation. But it was too late. Nor did they dare refuse to ratify the treaty,

so loud and universal was the joy throughout France at the return of peace. Equally vociferous was the approval of the General who had secured it. Bonaparte, great in pacification as he had been in contest, was now the most popular hero in France.

He soon afterwards returned to Paris, and was welcomed with effusion. But, with immense astuteness and self-restraint, he appeared but little in public, and his modesty, the mystery that invested him, multiplied the eagerness of the crowd to do him honour. The municipality of Paris had paid him the compliment of rechristening the street in which he lived the Rue de la Victoire. Now the Directory, who both hated and feared him, were bound to take the lead, and gave him a great public *fête* at the Luxembourg, where for the first time he was on view, so to speak, to the Parisian crowd, who accorded him the most rapturous reception. The official welcome found voice in eloquent addresses doing justice to his eminent services; and its sincerity was so little appreciated by its object that he would not taste food or drink at the banquet that followed the *fête*.

That the Directory should be anxious to

get rid of Bonaparte again, by fair means or foul, was natural enough. Whether they contemplated the latter or not, they fell in eagerly with his new plans against England—for the moment France's only enemy left in the field—especially that part which aimed at the subjugation of the East. To exile their dangerous rival to Egypt was the readiest method of counteracting any ambitious projects based upon his increasing popularity—projects which, as we shall see, had already taken definite shape and consistency. Bonaparte had never forgotten or laid aside his designs upon Egypt. Despite his many and serious preoccupations in Italy, he had studied how to effect the invasion. He had been appointed to the command of the Army of England, and had been dispatched in February 1798 to inspect the northern coast of France and superintend the arrangements for attacking England. But he carried in his carriage the books and plans for the Egyptian expedition, and worked upon them in all his spare time. He meant, indeed, to utilise for this purpose the preparations made against England.

The most ardent worshipper of the genius of Napoleon must surely admit that it was at fault in this new enterprise, for which he was mainly responsible. The expedition to Egypt was a gigantic mistake—as great as that to Russia, which in 1812 led to his downfall. From the patriotic point of view—not one that weighed much, perhaps—it was full of danger for France, for it removed to a great distance the finest troops, the best generals, at a time when the peace of Europe was by no means assured. They were, as a matter of fact, cut off from France for a couple of years, practically prisoners, although at large, and their services absolutely lost: the good to be gained was problematical, visionary, an empty conquest, as it presently proved. The scheme was based on error, and in one chief particular. It was aimed against England, and it quite miscalculated or overlooked the sort of retaliation it might provoke. Napoleon did not realise till long afterwards the extent of England's naval power. At that time Nelson was in the Mediterranean with a strong fleet: that



BONAPARTE IN EGYPT

(By Detaille)

From the original Picture in the collection of Sir George White, Bart., Cotham House, Bristol.

which presently ended the French enterprise by the crushing defeat of Brueys at the mouth of the Nile. From the moment the expedition sailed it was at the mercy of the enemy afloat, and only escaped destruction by a series of lucky chances that justified Bonaparte's claim to be the especial favourite of fortune.

Something more than the proximate advantages urged Bonaparte forward. He hoped, no doubt, to achieve vast renown on this wider field—to prove, indeed, that he was the man for France, the one essential to her greatness. But he had the second thought that this would be further assured by the incompetence of the Directory when left to itself. He admitted afterwards in his memoirs that if he was to become master of France the necessity for him would be emphasised by the mishaps inevitable in his absence. Even now he aspired to supreme power. When, on the eve of departure, he had planned a *coup de main* to seize it, the Directory had something stronger than mere suspicion of his intentions. He suddenly wished to back out of the Eastern expedition. The pros-

pect of another war with Austria was his excuse; he hesitated, he said, to deprive France of so important an agent as the flower of the French Army. But he was hurried off, willy-nilly; his protests were silenced. Even his favourite device, that of resignation, failed. For when he offered it, one of the Directors took him at his word, and, putting a pen into his hand, said, "Write it, by all means." The farce was ended by another Director snatching the pen away.

All was ready; the one indispensable need, that of the sinews of war, had been met by fresh spoliation. Switzerland was invaded, Rome occupied afresh. Greed was undoubtedly the motive cause of each. "The Directory hungered after the millions in the Treasury of Berne," Bonaparte wrote at the time. Berthier, who conducted the attack on Rome, said to his chief, "I know I have been sent here to fill the cash-box!" So open and unblushing was the pillage that large sums seized by General Brune at Berne were sent straight to Toulon. Greed, too, was the bait dangled before the troops to incite them to the highest efforts, as in

the first Italian campaign. In an address to the expeditionary army Bonaparte promised every soldier that on his return he should bring back money enough to buy himself a couple of acres of land. This frank appeal to the worst passions of the soldiery displeased the Directory, and the General himself must have felt he had gone too far, for the words do not appear in his later proclamations, while the authenticity of the first address has been denied, although it rests on incontrovertible authority.

The expedition sailed on May 10. It consisted of 25,000 men, under some of the most approved generals of the Republic—Desaix, Kléber, Davoust, Reynier, Caffarelli. The new generation, the coming men, were represented by Murat, Lannes, Marmont, Berthier, Andréossi, Junot, Lasalle—all destined to win great renown in war. Some of the most famous *savants*, French leaders of light and learning, accompanied Bonaparte: Monge, Berthollet, Denon, Geoffrey St Hilaire, Dolmieu. Their painstaking labours were afterwards published in the magnificent *Description of Egypt*, a work dear to bibliophiles, and about the only

tangible result of the invasion. They revived an interest in that ancient land, and laid the foundations of the science of Egyptology, to which, however, they contributed little in comparison to the work of later investigators. It is curious to note that among the operations recommended to Bonaparte by the Directory was "the cutting of the Isthmus of Suez"; but he had no Lesseps in his train. Another instruction was to "drive the English out of all their Eastern possessions"—a work of considerable magnitude, which was never attempted.

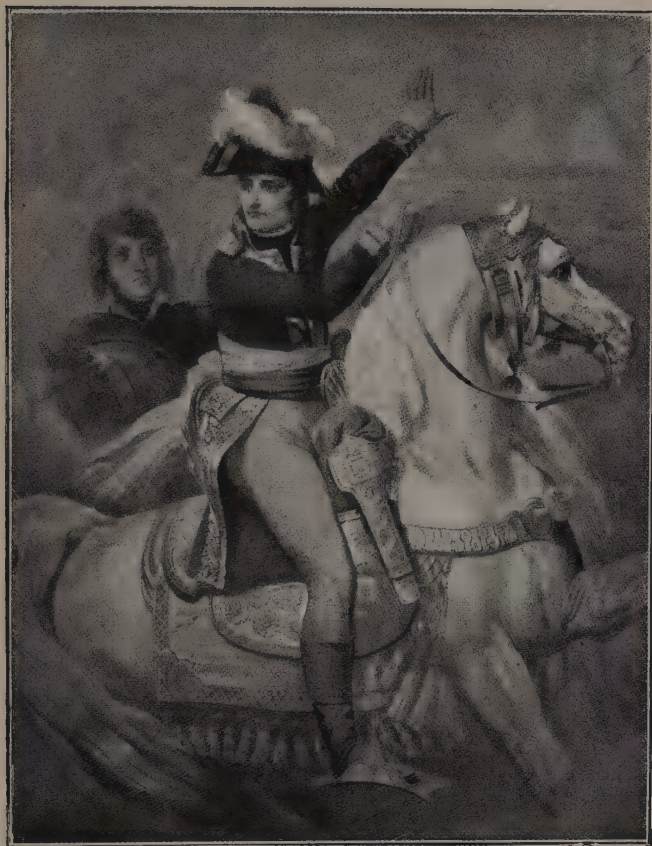
The voyage to Egypt was a series of lucky escapes for the expedition. Its preparation was known, but not its object, and the bulk of the English fleet watched the Straits of Gibraltar, the most probable issue, while Nelson alone blockaded Toulon. A gale drove his ships to the southward, and in their absence the French set sail. Nelson heard this, and followed in pursuit, but with no knowledge of the course he should steer, and while he made for Naples, the French reached Malta, which fell an easy prey. No effort was made to defend

this ancient place of arms, a fortress still so strong that the French General Caffarelli wittily declared "it was well someone was there to open the gates, or we should never have got inside." Yet the French fleet would even then have fared badly had Nelson come upon them. Admiral Brueys, who was in chief command of this cumbrous flotilla, five hundred ships in all, transports and warships, carrying 25,000 troops and 10,000 seamen, said that a dozen enterprising frigates would have destroyed it.

Now Nelson, guessing the true direction of the French, hurried eastward, but over-shot his quarry, and passing the enemy's fleet in the night somewhere about Crete, reached Alexandria before it. Finding no one, he sailed on to the Levant, but his ships had not been gone one day before the French arrived. Bonaparte, fearing they were still near, disembarked precipitately and occupied Alexandria. He had got into the rat-trap with great ease and seeming good fortune. Barely six weeks had elapsed since his departure from Toulon. He had taken Malta, and Egypt lay at his mercy.

The Land of the Pharaohs was at that

time held by the Mamelukes, a military caste owning nominal allegiance to their Suzerain, the Sultan of Turkey. They were a species of Prætorian Guards, slaves recruited in Circassia and Georgia, rendering duty to their masters, the Beys. It was with these that Bonaparte had first to deal. The march of his army across the desert in the dog-days had sorely tried his troops: short of food and suffering the pangs of thirst, they murmured loudly and lost all heart. But the first encounter with the Mamelukes restored their spirit. It was a massacre more than a defeat, for the native horsemen could make no impression on the French squares. A second action was fought under the shadow of the Pyramids with a like result. The French had but twenty or thirty killed; the Mamelukes a couple of thousand. And after the victory came the plunder. Every Mameluke carried his property on his person: costly arms, jewel-incrusted, and bags full of gold. The French soldiers despoiled their foes found dead upon the field, and, as many perished in the Nile, they contrived to fish out the corpses by twisting their bayonets



BONAPARTE AT THE PYRAMIDS

(After the Picture by Gros)

into boat-hooks. After that Bonaparte reported that his men were more reconciled to Egypt. All promised well, indeed, for the establishment of the new power, when a terrible catastrophe destroyed every hope and practically sealed the fate of the expedition. This was Nelson's victory of the Nile.

Admiral Brueys had been left off Alexandria with orders to take shelter in that port or in the Bay of Aboukir. Failing both, he was to return to Corfu. He did fail in both, and yet could not leave, for he had neither food nor stores. Moreover, he had no news from the army. All communications had been intercepted, and he could not well withdraw till he was satisfied that Bonaparte had succeeded and could carry or transmit the news to France. In the midst of these reasonable hesitations Nelson caught and smote him where he lay, helpless, in the Bay of Aboukir.

The destruction of their means of retreat spread dismay through the French ranks, but Bonaparte met the disaster with a firm front, and sought to consolidate his position in the country, to complete its conquest,

develop it, and make it self-contained. His quick eye saw the capabilities of the country, the fertility that had made it once the great granary of the world; and had he been left to work out a benign policy he might have anticipated the prosperity it is now at last achieving under English rule. But Bonaparte was never a man of peace; and moreover, he was soon called upon to meet attack from within and without.

A secret conspiracy in Cairo, organised among the most turbulent populace in the world, showed what little hold he had upon the people he claimed to have rescued from oppression. This insurrection proved that there could be no alliance between the East and the West. Sham Mohammedanism could have nothing in common with the fanaticism of the true believer. The wild Cairenes would have none of Bonaparte's pretences, and rose in sudden fierce revolt; they slew French soldiers in the streets, and proclaimed a holy war. Of course, the revolt was suppressed with ruthless severity; the streets ran with blood, every Arab taken with arms in his hands was slain. Sacks full of human heads were



THE BATTLE OF THE NILE, AUGUST 1, 1798.

(After the Picture by Pocock)

displayed one morning in the Esbekiyeh place. Two or three thousand lives were taken as the penalty of resisting the blessings of French domination. Now a far more serious danger loomed near. The Porte had never acquiesced in the invasion of Egypt, and was now preparing to repossess the country by force of arms. Two armies were collected, one at Rhodes, the other in Syria, and Bonaparte resolved to take the initiative against the latter. He had aimed always at Syria as the stepping-stone, the intermediate station between Egypt and India. He had not yet awakened from his extravagant dream, from the wild ambition of emulating Alexander the Great or, failing that, of uniting the Christian populations in a descent upon Constantinople. Thence, having made short work of the Grand Turk, he would return on Europe "from the reverse side." With all these fantastic fancies he was keenly alive to the advantages of striking first and early. In 1799 he advanced into Syria at the head of 11,000 men. The rest of his army held Upper Egypt, Cairo and Alexandria.

This campaign in Syria added nothing to

the General's military reputation. It was chequered by failures, disappointments, by at least one black deed. Successful at El Arish and Jaffa, his hitherto conquering soldiers were repelled at Acre by the sturdy defence, of which an English sailor, Sir Sidney Smith, was the heart and soul. Kléber's danger at Mount Tabor was converted into a victory by Bonaparte, and an army coming from Damascus to raise the Siege of Acre was routed and dispersed. But the French could not take Acre. It was assaulted fourteen times, with serious losses in men and officers, and always unsuccessfully; the besieged made twenty-six sorties, and did much damage. The plague was epidemic in the French camp. A Turkish army had embarked at Rhodes for Egypt. Bonaparte knew that he must retreat. Acre was, in fact, a smaller Moscow—a lesser disaster, but yet having a distinct influence on his character and destiny. It shattered once and for all his vague pretensions to an Eastern career. It brought him down from chimera to bald fact. Henceforth, as he told Joseph, he had done with imagination. It was killed

at Acre. It is strange, indeed, that this strong brain should have been beguiled into such vagaries, and upon such purely visionary grounds. He soon found that he had narrowly missed the substance by grasping at the shadow.

It will be well, before quitting the Syrian episode, to consider the grave impeachment that rests upon his character in at least one phase of the campaign. All who yield unquestioning, not to say blind, homage to the genius of Napoleon, and resent the plain speaking of more independent critics, should remember the massacre of prisoners at Jaffa. The act has been glozed over and excused, but never denied. Napoleon in later years admitted it, but gave reasons that will not bear examination. The story runs—a true story, too, if we are to believe irrefragable evidence—that after the capture of Jaffa some 2500 prisoners remained as a burden upon Bonaparte. He knew, if he released them, it would be to reinforce the enemy; to hold them was a tax upon his means and supplies. After two days' doubt he solved the difficulty by slaughtering them in cold blood upon the shore, where they

were shot down or bayoneted by the unwilling soldiery, some of whose officers refused to take part in the butchery. Two of the excuses offered have been given; a third was that they were mostly released after El Arish, and had again taken up arms. The first excuse might be valid, although little was really to be feared from any number of the enemy, so ill-matched were the combatants, except in the one affair of Acre; as for food, a vast quantity of biscuits and rice had been captured; as for the breach of faith, no more than two or three hundred men could have been furnished from El Arish. It is a terrible blot upon his character, a stigma he would willingly have removed.

His guilt in another discreditable transaction was never clearly brought home to him—the charge of poisoning a number of his plague-stricken soldiers. It was believed in the French army at the time that Bonaparte suggested to his principal surgeon that opium should be given to the sick to spare them a more cruel death at the hands of the Turks. The story has been seriously affirmed and indignantly denied, but perhaps

the best defence is the fact that when Sir Sidney Smith arrived at Jaffa he found many Frenchmen in hospital still alive. A plausible explanation is that opium was placed at each bedside when the sick were abandoned to their fate, and that any who saw no other escape from torture had thus the means of suicide. But now the end was approaching; the dream was nearly over. Soon after Bonaparte's return to Cairo, the landing of a Turkish army gave him a chance of closing the Egyptian episode and of ending the fiasco under a last victory, easily won. It was at this moment that a pile of newspapers fell into his hands, sent him by Sir Sidney Smith, as some say, with malicious intention. Now for the first time he read how defeat and misfortune had closed in on France during his absence: Italy was lost again, the invasion of France imminent, the Directory discredited and at its last gasp. He had, in brief, grasped at the shadow and left the substance. In France lay his real opportunity. There he might regain lost ground, and by a daring stroke restore his fortunes.

He resolved to brave all dangers in the

way—all the odium of a flight to France. He knew he must be blamed for deserting the comrades he had led into this *impasse*, and who relied upon his genius to help them out. Not only did he himself abandon them, but he robbed the army in Egypt of its best officers. When he embarked secretly for France he was accompanied by a chosen band of followers, the cream and flower of the force.



CHAPTER V

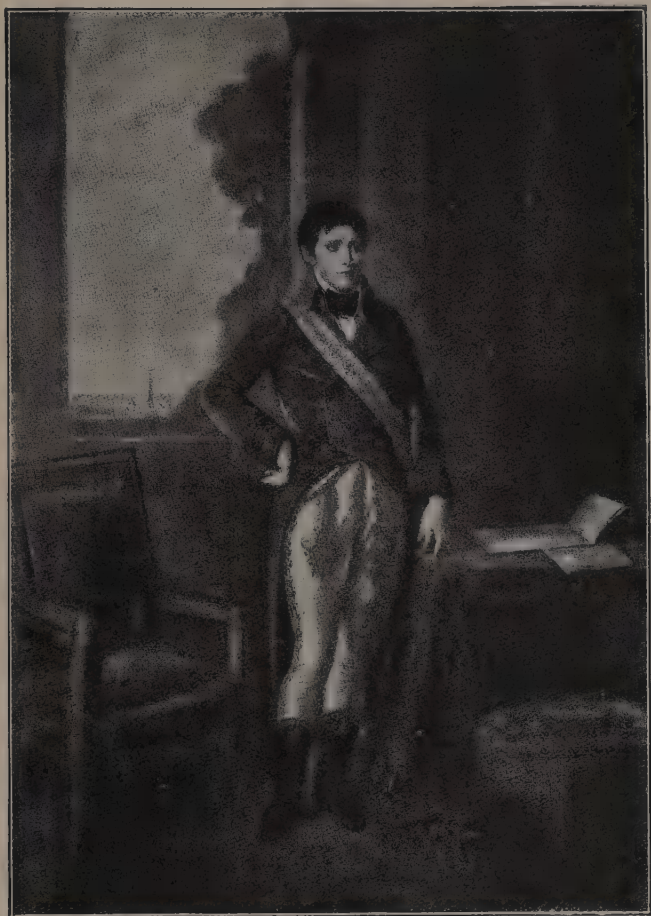
SOVEREIGN POWER—1799-1800



NAPOLEON'S star was still in the ascendant when the 18th Brumaire (November 10) brought him to sovereign power. Fortune smiled on him in his flight from Egypt; it played for him when he landed in France. On the voyage he was saved almost by a miracle from English cruisers and an English war-
 prison; he should have been arrested on landing for a breach of the quarantine regulations. He made a triumphal progress through the provinces to Paris, and, instead

of glorious acclaim, he should have been taxed with failure and the loss of many legions. Finally, the great plot, which was so curiously successful, was sadly marred by flaws in its plan, by errors in its execution. There were times when the issue hung by a thread. The attempt was in the main astute and audacious, but it neglected to provide for the handling of the two Councils, and at the supreme moment Bonaparte was quite unequal to the occasion. His conduct at St Cloud was so weak and injudicious that, but for his brother Lucien, the whole affair might have ended in a miserable fiasco.

Withal, the "pear was ripe," to use Bonaparte's expression, and ready to be plucked by any daring hand. The existing Government was completely discredited in the country; defeat abroad, distress at home, had so shaken the Directory that the Councils, newly elected by the popular voice, were strong enough to change its members. Three of these were ciphers, but the fourth, Sieyès, an ex-abbé, was an ambitious, capable politician, who held clear views, and had a new Constitution in his pocket. Now in the chaos of parties a new Jacobin Club



NAPOLÉON BONAPARTE

(From the Portrait by Greuze in the Versailles Gallery)

had been formed, which aimed at control and would have revived the Terror; it included two good soldiers, Jourdan and Bernadotte, and was for a vigorous prosecution of the war. Sieyès, also eager for fresh military triumphs, looked about for a general who would win victories without meddling with politics. After coquetting fruitlessly with Bernadotte, he found him in Joubert, who, unfortunately, fell at Novi; then he addressed Moreau, an honest man, but of weak and vacillating spirit, who rejected his advances. His sympathies, too, were with the exiled Bourbons, and he dreamed of a monarchical restoration. Sieyès might now have turned to Masséna or Brune, both of whom had just been successful in the field, but at this juncture Bonaparte reappeared. Here was the man, and more than the man, for the situation. Sieyès "wanted a general, but a general he could control," and with his keen judgment he foresaw that if he offered Bonaparte a ladder it would be kicked down as soon as used. When at length they were brought together by the force of common interests and the efforts of common friends, Sieyès

knew the fate that was in store for him. "If we succeed, Bonaparte will throw us all aside like that!" and he made a significant gesture. After Brumaire he recalled these predictions, saying, "We have found our master. Bonaparte means to do everything; he knows how, and he can."

On his first arrival, however, the young General held aloof from all parties, considering carefully which side he had best espouse. His prestige in the country was undoubtedly great; it had been revived by the publication of his dispatches announcing the really sorry victory of Aboukir; the people at large had always thought him a victim exiled to the Far East by a jealous and vindictive Government, and to express their feelings, they caught at the chance title of a play performed at Lyons as he passed through. "The return of the hero" was a phrase on every lip. During his absence, his family had worked hard in his cause. There were Bonapartist *salons* at Josephine's and at her sister-in-law's houses, where much of the intelligence and the best wit of Paris constantly collected. Both Joseph and Lucien were ever active in gaining friends

or increasing the disunion of factions. The feeling in the army could not be exactly gauged, but two regiments in the garrison of Paris had served with him in Italy, and Murat had won over a third. He might not count upon all the leaders, for Augereau, Jourdan and Bernadotte were openly hostile ; but he had brought with him many faithful friends from Egypt—Lannes, Murat, Berthier and Marmont. Again, Beurnonville and Macdonald believed in him, and he found many officers whom he had provided for when Governor of Paris in 1796.

While waiting to choose his part, he used his old arts to increase his popularity, stimulating the curiosity of the people ; keeping much out of the way, mysteriously apart, seldom appearing in public, sitting in a latticed box at the theatre, constantly visiting the Institute, and in plain clothes, so as to exalt the civil over the military idea, to sink the ambitious soldier in the peaceable citizen.

But behind this scene he was intriguing busily. His first notion was to dispossess Sieyès and to supplant him in the Directorate ; but he did not possess the age quali-

fication—forty years—and the other Directors would not yield on this point. He next tried the Jacobin Club, which, although it had been roughly handled by Sieyès, who was really head of the executive, was still a power, backed by the three Generals, Augereau, Jourdan and Bernadotte. This party, as maintaining the old Republicanism, was influential in the country and with the army, and might easily have carried Bonaparte forward into a position to seize the reins of State. But Bernadotte was obstinately hostile; he saw in Bonaparte a dangerous rival to his own personal ambition. Later, when the chief plot was on the verge of *dénouement*, Bernadotte and others organised a counter-plot, which was to forestall Bonaparte at St Cloud; but it proved abortive through the treachery of Salicetti, one of the number.

Now at last Bonaparte was brought to see that the safest and most promising combination was with Sieyès. There was no love lost between them, they distrusted and hated each other heartily. Only a few days before, Sieyès wished to have Bonaparte shot for breaking the military

code. Again Bonaparte would have disgraced Sieyès as a pensioner of Prussia and a traitor to his country. Josephine said openly to all who would listen that Sieyès was her husband's *bête noire*. But their common friends, such men as Talleyrand, Roederer, Cabanis, were eager for the alliance, caring little whether the two leaders fell out afterwards, so as the general cause was gained and the *rapprochement* was effected. Sieyès gave in with reluctance; although a coward at heart, he knew he was sacrificing himself. Bonaparte readily overcame his own repugnance, and willingly made the first overtures, feeling that he could make short work of Sieyès, while he was fully alive to the immediate benefits of associating himself with conspirators whose plans had long been laid. Everything was so far organised already that when Bonaparte came into the plot it was decided to strike the great blow within a week or ten days. The principles, the means and methods, had been discussed and prepared; the motive power alone was wanting. The man of action was found in Bonaparte, a rôle for which he was pre-eminently well

fitted, although he fell away sadly in the hour of supreme trial.

Sieyès having, so to speak, abdicated, Bonaparte took the lead, and applied his vigorous mind to perfecting the preparations and consolidating the forces that made for the conspiracy. Two Directors had been gained over, Ducos and Sieyès, the latter also controlled a majority in the Council of Ancients; Lucien Bonaparte was President of the Council of Five Hundred, a stronghold of Jacobinism, but with a few good friends to the opposite cause; the Municipality of Paris was favourable; Fouché, who smelt out the conspiracy, and was ready to join it if it promised to win the day, guaranteed the neutrality of the police. Money was advanced, £40,000 in hard cash by certain tradesmen of Paris, to meet preliminary expenses. The one doubtful quantity was the probable attitude of the great body, the rank and file, of the army, largely Republican, and therefore in principle on the side of the Jacobins. But soldiers are seldom acute politicians, the French, easily roused by enthusiasm, least of all; and it

was hoped that the troops would throw in their lot with their own Generals rather than with the "Advocates" and "Pékins," whose opinions they really shared.

Most of the Generals were already on the side of the conspiracy. Moreau had not given in his formal adhesion, but Bonaparte had attracted him by his *camaraderie*—his frank admiration for the other's brilliant deeds, his magnificent gifts; they had freely exchanged views on the military art at their first meeting, and parted good friends, although Moreau, indisposed as ever to take a decided line, had refused to listen to Bonaparte's plans. His answer on another occasion was that he did not wish to know any secrets, but that he was sick to death of the "Advocates," and with his staff was quite at Bonaparte's disposal. Macdonald and Serrurier had made the same promise. Lefebvre (the husband of Madame Sans-Gêne) was a staunch Republican; he was Military Governor of Paris, and the Directors outside the conspiracy relied confidently upon his support. Bonaparte, knowing his man, left him in the dark until the last moment, meaning

to secure him by some impassioned appeal. The task of winning over the body of officers was entrusted to the General's most staunch supporters. Berthier took charge of those high in rank; Marmont, who belonged to that arm, the artillery; Murat, for the same reason, the cavalry; and Lannes, the infantry.

The air was full of portents. Yet the nonconforming Directors, under the blandishments of Bonaparte, were both blind and deaf. One of them, Gohier, presided at a banquet given to Bonaparte. It was to have been a public compliment, but, while the Ancients approved, the Five Hundred opposed it, and the necessary funds were provided by subscription. No more silent and gloomy *fête* could be imagined. Every mind was preoccupied, the conspirators were full of their dark schemes. What Bonaparte felt may be seen in his marked abstinence at the feast: he ate or drank nothing but a crust of bread, brought by the faithful Duroc, with a pint of red wine. At such an epoch and while meditating dark deeds the basest reprisals were possible. Whether

or not Hoche had been poisoned, his fate was a warning to Bonaparte, who remained but a short half-hour at the banquet ; then, escaping by a side-door, he joined Sieyès, and the final arrangements were made.

This was November 6, the 15th Brumaire, only three days before the first blow was struck. The plan now adopted was, first the removal of the Councils from Paris to St Cloud under a clause in the Constitution when danger threatened them, and a Jacobin plot was invented by the conspirators to justify this. The same decree was to invest Bonaparte with the supreme command of all the troops in Paris ; the Directory was then to be extinguished by the arrest or enforced resignation of all members hostile to the movement, and the Councils were to be compelled to create a new form of government, a triumvirate of dictators—Bonaparte, Sieyès, and Roger Ducos.

On the day the Ancients were to be invited to make the decree, Bonaparte, presuming on authority not yet conferred upon him, ordered a grand parade of the troops and summoned all the Generals

of his following to meet him in front of his house at six in the morning. Moreau was among the number, Bernadotte also, but in plain clothes and still very stand-off; Lefebvre, warned at the eleventh hour, obeyed in surprise, which was heightened at seeing regiments on the move under orders other than his. He was greatly annoyed, but when Bonaparte asked him if he would suffer the "Advocates" to destroy the Republic, he replied hotly, "Certainly not! let us throw them into the Seine!"

Meanwhile the Ancients had assembled, and had passed the decrees. They were brought to Bonaparte where he waited in the Rue de la Victoire, surrounded by his staff, and he read them aloud, calling on them to aid him in succouring the country. Then, at the head of a brilliant *cortège*, he rode to the Tuileries through the streets, every important point in which, every issue, was now strongly occupied by troops. He was well received all along his route, although there was little enthusiasm among the people; Paris was quiet, even apathetic. Arrived at the Hall of the

Ancients, he was admitted to express his ardent love for the Constitution and his resolve to die in its defence. He swore that France should enjoy true freedom, based upon civil liberty and national representation, but he evaded taking the oath of the Constitution; and when called upon to do so, his friends broke up the meeting, declaring that since the last decree no proceedings were legal except at St Cloud. By this time the Five Hundred had met and were greatly agitated, demanding full explanation of the decree of removal; but Lucien, their President, put them off with difficulty till next day.

Everything seemed to promise well, so much so that the chief conspirator was greatly elated and confident of success. He would not listen to those who, like Sieyès, urged the necessity for arbitrary precautions, the prompt arrest of the most irreconcilable in the two Councils, the closure of the barrier gates of Paris. The neglect of one or two vital points was probably due to this same over-confidence. It was a grave error to have left unsettled how the Five Hundred should be

dealt with if they proved refractory, or by whom. The failure to prepare St Cloud for the sittings of the Council was a mistake that might have ruined everything, for it meant delay when despatch in striking blow on blow was the essence of the situation. One danger—that of Bernadotte's counterstroke—was, however, warded off, as I have said.

The military measures taken were sound and comprehensive, as might have been expected with so eminent a soldier. The decisive points were occupied in force, and at each a trusty general held the command. Lannes was at the Tuileries; Marmont in the École Militaire; Serrurier took charge of the Point du Jour; Macdonald, of Versailles; and Murat, fiery and impetuous and uncompromising, was at St Cloud. To Moreau was entrusted the post of honour, as it seemed, the safe keeping of the Luxembourg, the headquarters of the executive, where the two dissentient Directors, Gohier and Moulins, were held as prisoners. By this astute selection Moreau was made responsible for the arbitrary act and suffered for it in the loss

of character and influence. But he fell readily into the trap, beguiled into the belief that while Bonaparte might wield civil power, he (Moreau) would be Commander-in-Chief. Jourdan and Augereau were not utilised, much to the chagrin of the latter, who gave in his adhesion too late.

Bonaparte joined Murat at St Cloud early, where there were 8000 troops, partly made up of the Legislative Guard. The members of the Council began to collect about noon, but did not meet in session till two in the afternoon, as no chambers had been prepared. Then the Five Hundred assembled in the Orangerie upon the ground-floor, the Ancients upstairs in the Hall of Apollo. The Five Hundred, uneasy, distrustful, and mainly still loyal to the Constitution, insisted that all should swear allegiance to it anew, a proposal gladly accepted by Lucien Bonaparte, their President, as it would gain time. The Ancients, although favourable to the conspiracy, hesitated how to act, when a letter was received falsely stating that four Directors had resigned, and that the

Directory no longer existed, whereas Barras alone had resigned, and Gohier and Moulins were under restraint. This strange news was followed by the appearance of Bonaparte in the Hall.

All now rested with him. He had only to make good his case; to give the Ancients some specious excuse for arbitrary measures. But he could not tell them what to do; he could not help them to justify what they had already done. He was terribly agitated, and had none of his native eloquence at command—the torrent of words that might serve for arguments and carry away an audience gained in advance. He had made the mistake of believing that overt acts of rebellion could be concealed under legal forms; the strong arm can strike and conquer in the heat of conflict, but in the presence of a cold, critical assembly it is not easy to find an excuse for force. Bonaparte failed entirely to show what dangers threatened the Republic or from what quarter. He first charged the Jacobins, then Barras and Moulins, lastly the Five Hundred, but could give no details. His charge against

the Five Hundred was the more absurd, as it was already the sovereign power. When further pressed he stammered and lost countenance—lost, indeed, his head. All he could say was that he had been invited to overthrow the Government and accept power he could hold only at the hands of the French people. Then he passed to threats, pointing to the troops in sight, swearing he would call upon them to come to his assistance. When at last he cried that fortune and the God of War were on his side, Bourrienne, aghast, whispered, “You do not know what you are saying!” and the General’s friends, dismayed, hurried him out of the Hall. The impression left in history by this extraordinary scene is that the conspiracy was absolutely unable to formulate any definite reason for intervention. There was no real need for the *coup d’état*; it had no excuse, no basis but the inordinate ambition of those who brought it about. The Constitution might have been improved without surrendering the country to a military dictatorship.

Downstairs the Five Hundred, having

taken their oaths, were awaiting with great impatience the explanation of their exile to St Cloud, when Bonaparte rushed in, surrounded by his Grenadiers. The whole assembly rose in fury at this outrage. Indignant cries resounded through the Chamber: "Put him out!" "It is a breach of the law!" "Armed men cannot enter here!" Some upbraided Bonaparte personally; some took him by the collar and shook him. The story that daggers were drawn upon him, and his life threatened, are entirely unsupported by the evidence of eye-witnesses. At length, overborne by this hostile reception, the General turned pale, and, fainting in his soldiers' arms, was carried out of the Hall.

The situation seemed desperate, but it was saved by Lucien Bonaparte, the President, who at once left the chair and with eager eloquence laboured hard to defend his brother. They would have impeached and outlawed the General, but Lucien, resuming his functions, refused to put the question; it was renewed with increased vehemence, when the President tore off his insignia, and resigning his post,

left the Hall, aided by a squad of Grenadiers, opportunely sent by Bonaparte. An appeal to force was still delayed, however, for the bulk of the troops were the bodyguard of the legislative bodies, and full reliance was not placed in them till Lucien, whom they knew well as President, mounting a horse, harangued them. The Council needed protection; it was tyrannised over, he said, by armed traitors paid by England. The soldiers responded with cries of "Vive Bonaparte!" and Murat asked for permission to clear out the Hall at the point of the bayonet. It was all but empty when, with drums beating, the Grenadiers charged in, and soon the last Republican, the last vestige of liberty, had disappeared. France was handed over tied and bound to Bonaparte, who, no doubt, had laid the foundations of his coming ascendancy; but it cannot be said that he was entirely the architect of his own fortunes, or that he crowned the edifice for himself.

The victory was easily gained. The true story of it has just been told, although Napoleon afterwards in the zenith of his power liked to believe that it had been all

his own work, that all parties had looked to him, and that he had held the issues entirely in his own hand. It is at least certain that Paris and all France acquiesced readily in his advent to power. They had had enough of revolution, of the rise and fall of masters, none of whom had the strength and prestige of this young conqueror. Bonaparte had thus numberless friends and no enemies. He had never been involved in the political strife of the times ; during his long absences in Italy and Egypt parties wore themselves out, and the succession fell to him without the animosities that must have followed overthrow. Everyone now surrendered readily to his dictatorship, hardly realising what it meant, perhaps, but glad to accept a ruler who promised peace and strong government. There were to be no more factions, no Jacobins, no terrorists, no half-and-half men ; the Revolution was over, having accomplished its work.

As to the Government, Bonaparte took it in hand with the vigour and breadth of view that characterised this born ruler of men. He set himself to reorganise the State machinery, calling in to his assistance



INSTALLATION OF THE COUNCIL OF STATE
(From the Picture by A. Couder in the Versailles Gallery)

the best brains and the most expert intelligence of France. His coadjutor Consuls were Cambacérès and Lebrun—the first a great lawyer who had compiled codes for all Governments; the second, Lebrun, a skilled administrator and survivor of the old *régime*. Sieyès would not accept the subordinate rôle offered him, for Bonaparte, in his manipulation of Sieyès' draft Constitution, had adroitly drawn all executive power into his own hands, leaving his junior Consuls mere ciphers.

Gaudin, an especially competent financier, was set to reorganise the Treasury, and enlightened measures, promptly introduced, soon restored public credit. Laplace, the great mathematician, became Minister of the Interior, but soon resigned his functions into the hands of Lucien Bonaparte; Talleyrand controlled foreign affairs; Fouché, the police. Abrial took law and justice, Forfait the Navy, and Berthier the Ministry of War. Places were found in the new Senate, the Council of State, or the higher administration, for Cabanis, Monge, Berthollet, Volney, Daunou, Benjamin Constant, Chenier, J. B. Say, Riouffe, and many more,

embracing all shades of opinion. The co-conspirators in the 18th Brumaire were not forgotten: Roederer, St Jean d'Angély, Boulay de la Meurthe, Real, Berlier, and Regnier; ex-Royalists such as Devaisnes, Dufresne, Defermon; eminent specialists like Gantheaume, Chaptal, Fourcroy; men of his own cloth, and devoted adherents like Brune and Marmont.

But this great man was not above the pettiness of revenge. He had not the magnanimity to forget and forgive. His hand fell heavily upon his opponents in the Councils of the 18th Brumaire, and the citizens who had dared defend the Republic were proscribed and deported to Cayenne. General Jourdan was at first included in the list, but then withdrawn in view of public disfavour, only faintly expressed, however. Masséna's adhesion had been given in, but not too readily, and he was repaid by removal from the army with which he had subjugated Switzerland to the command of that of Italy, an inferior *rôle* with troops that were devoted to Bonaparte. For Kléber, whose letters of warning and complaint to the Directory had now fallen



NAPOLÉON PREMIER CONSUL
(By Boilly)

into the hands of the man against whom they were directed, Bonaparte planned a more insidious blow. While openly lavish of encomiums and encouragement, he secretly hoped to lead Kléber on to evacuate Egypt, an act for which, when accomplished, he meant to bring him to a court-martial on his return. But the assassin's knife put Kléber beyond the reach of Bonaparte's tender mercies, and no penalty overtook Menou, who actually carried out the surrender.

Moreau remained a great and dangerous rival in the field where Bonaparte was most eager to triumph. For the civil administrator was swallowed up in the soldier. War was Bonaparte's trade : he ruled France with the sword, "bóoted and spurred," to use his own expression ; his government was essentially military, and military glory was not only his dearest dream, but he relied upon new victories to cover up and gild his dictatorship. To renew the war while contriving that it should seem to be forced upon him was the essence of his diplomacy, and war became inevitable when England and Austria rejected his overtures. Throughout the

coup d'état preparations had been in progress. The civil war in La Vendée had been stamped out harshly and with a notable breach of faith; money, or rather the want of it, was still the chief difficulty, and the better methods of finance being slow in realising cash, Bonaparte raised it as he had done in his first Italian campaign, by enforced contributions from subject cities and states. Genoa was the first taxed; Holland was next mulcted in a heavy sum; Hamburg was told it might buy off cession to France by paying a large fine; efforts were made to squeeze more money out of Switzerland and Portugal.

At the outbreak of war in 1800, Austria, the only antagonist—for England's operations were all naval—had two armies in the field. One, under Kray, with 120,000 men, faced Moreau on the Rhine; the other, in Piedmont, threatening Genoa, Nice and Southern France, commanded by Melas, and numbering 117,000. Against the latter Masséna had only 20,000, but Moreau's army was 110,000, as that entrusted with by far the most important operations, whether offensive or defensive, and holding

a position vital to both sides ; the best line of attack, the shortest and most direct route to the enemy's capital, "the principal objective," as it is called in military science. These, the truest strategical considerations, pointed naturally to the employment of Moreau, reinforced by every available man, to operate against Kray's left, turn it, and penetrate by Ulm and Munich to Vienna. Success by this line would neutralise Melas in Piedmont, and probably cut him off altogether, as he was such a long way from home.

With his unerring instinct for war, Bonaparte saw this, of course, and he wished to command the Army of the Rhine in person. But he did not dare supersede Moreau, and Moreau distinctly refused to serve under him. Yet he had no notion of allowing this great rival to win victories, and possibly overshadow him by earning great laurels on his own account. He devised another plan of campaign, therefore, less perfect in theory, but in practice, under his masterly treatment, leading to little less triumphant results.

The possession of Switzerland was a great strategical advantage to France. It was a

strong outlier thrust forward into the enemy's country, and would serve to cover Moreau's right flank in any movement toward the Danube, or as a place of arms and advanced base in a campaign against the Austrians in Italy. This advantage entered into Bonaparte's plan, and helped him greatly in the scheme which he now devised, and for which, indeed, anticipating the reasons against his presence on the Rhine, he had been secretly preparing. He had a third army, the very existence of which he had concealed, ready to launch against Melas at a given moment : the Army of Reserve, as it was called, collected at Dijon, unknown to Europe, or despised and derided as a mere fiction. Yet it was already sixty thousand strong ; in part, good seasoned troops, the rest conscripts and new levies, of whose immaturity the most was made. Berthier nominally commanded this army, but its real leader was the First Consul, and its mission was to descend by the Swiss passes into Italy, and fall upon the flank and rear of Melas, who would be taken in reverse, while Masséna occupied him in front. Moreau's *rôle* was to make a

strong diversion by attacking Kray, and cutting him off from Italy. For this latter purpose, moreover, Moreau was also to detach 25,000 men under Lecourbe to guard the passes. Moreau was forbidden to advance beyond Ulm, and this, with the detachment of Lecourbe, effectually prevented him from doing great things.

Moreau, despite his limitations and the scantiness of his supplies in animals and stores, the bulk of which were diverted to the still phantom Army of Reserve, scored a brilliant success. He won five battles in fifteen days, and drove Kray before him with a loss of 30,000 men; then carrying out his instructions to the letter, like the good, straightforward soldier that he was, he halted short of Ulm as he was ordered. A further advance would have carried the entrenched camp at Ulm, and, anticipating the victory at Hohenlinden, have ensured the fall of Vienna. Yet, now, in the full flush of triumph, with noble self-abnegation he deprived himself of a fourth of his army, as agreed, and sent them to the St Gothard under Moncey and Lecourbe.

The story of Marengo has been told and

retold. The startling surprise of an army dropping from the snows of the Alps upon an unprepared foe, who neither expected nor believed in its existence; the capture of Milan, a dramatic *coup de théâtre*; the strange battle that was actually lost and yet was won. The campaign is not one that redounds to Bonaparte's credit. The happy daring that carried the army across the great St Bernard was nearly wasted by one small check—that offered by the fort of Bard; the advantage gained by the direction and promptitude of the advance was lost by the failure to strike Melas before he could gather together his scattered army, and the decision to first secure Milan. This appeal to the gallery sacrificed Masséna, who, starved out and left to his fate, surrendered at Genoa, where he had kept 20,000 men at bay. Bonaparte could not regain the advantage he had lost. While he paused at Milan, the enemy concentrated, unknown to him, for it is a fact that up to the day before Marengo he was in the dark as to the movements of Melas. Moreover, he held too much ground; his front, extending from Cremona on the left, through Milan to Arona



BONAPARTE URGING ON HIS MEN IN THEIR PASSAGE
OVER THE ALPS

(From the Picture by David in the Versailles Gallery)

on the right, was too wide, and demanded so many troops that he was weaker than Melas at the decisive point. So when the Austrian General resolved to break through, and, starting from Alessandria, recover his communications through Piacenza with the east, his attacks upon Victor and Lannes, although long courageously repelled, were in the end successful. Victor, on the left, was routed; Lannes, on the right, in full retreat. Melas had actually gone back to Alessandria to send off despatches announcing the victory when it was snatched from the Austrians—not by Bonaparte, but by Desaix.

Desaix, who did not survive the day, but who would surely have become one of the first of Napoleon's Marshals, had only just joined and received a command. His division had been detached towards Novi to feel for the enemy, when the sounds of battle reached him, and, like a true soldier, he worked to the guns. He reached a point where he came upon the flying French, but, not despairing, he sought to turn fortune by a desperate cavalry charge. He was killed at the first onset; the enemy stood

firm, but Kellermann's dragoons took them in flank, and with a second tempestuous charge carried all before them. This success encouraged the rest to rally. The French, taking heart, resumed the offensive; the Austrians fell back in their turn, and speedily retreated in a panic. Thus a charge of cavalry delivered at the right moment saved Bonaparte from irreparable disaster. In no battle was his military genius seen to less advantage than at Marengo. Yet in none did he reap more substantial results. Had he failed, too, his nascent fortunes would have suffered complete eclipse. His family would have been proscribed; the adventurer would have "fallen, like Lucifer, never to rise again."



CHAPTER VI

FROM CONSULATE TO CROWN—1800-1804



It has been well said that the Consulate was "the period of Bonaparte's greatest and most enduring renown." He had achieved his position; his marvellous strength and ability, his audacity and astuteness, favoured by his great good luck, had carried him to supreme power. He seemed eager now to show his gratitude to France for the prize she had suffered him to win. The country had accepted him gladly; it had need of him, of the strong hand to reorganise her

institutions and build up the Government anew. The head was wanting, the place of master vacant; there must soon have been a monarchical restoration had not Bonaparte stepped in. That he was autocratic, wielding unquestioned authority, was all in his favour, and made, as it seemed, for France. No one but a dictator could do what was so urgently required. Everything had gone by the board: the Revolution, essentially destructive, had left chaos, there had been a clean sweep, and it was for the new ruler to reconstruct in every department of State, administrative, legal, educational, financial.

He had soon full leisure to devote all his energies to internal affairs. The peace of Lunéville in 1801 was followed by that of Amiens the next year. Austria had sheathed the sword after Marengo, and later, England came to terms. Bonaparte, as general pacificator, had a claim to the goodwill of all at home and abroad. France was especially pleased. No longer proscribed and hated as the apostle of change, she once more took her place in the comity of nations, and had Bonaparte been content with peaceful progress, he might have placed her on



BONAPARTE, FIRST CONSUL

(Drawn by L. David)

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the very pinnacle of a more enduring greatness than that gained by his short-lived military triumphs. This marvellous country, then as since, needed only a little assured quiet to blossom out and burgeon into prosperity. Trade quickened instantly with the revival of credit under a strong, secure Government. There was once more a free circulation of money, *fêtes* and festivities were frequent, work plentiful, all classes of shopkeepers sold their goods freely, especially those that purveyed for the wants of fashionable society. In the first winter of the Consular *régime* there were ten thousand balls and five or six thousand dinner-parties given in Paris. The Government took the lead with frequent entertainments. Bonaparte, as First Consul, dined two hundred guests every ten days in the great Gallery of Diana in the Tuileries. Cambacérès, the Second Consul, a noted *gourmet* and good liver, kept up great state in a big house in the Rue de Provence; the Third Consul, Lebrun, also received twice weekly. Bonaparte's favourite Generals were encouraged, nay, ordered to marry and set up fine establishments. Lannes,

Marmont, Junot, and a dozen more were provided with pretty wives, who formed the personal Court of Josephine. Not strangely, the silk-merciers, costumiers, hair-dressers, perfumers, and the rest were kept constantly busy. It was the First Consul's most anxious care to stimulate native manufactures. Through him the silks and the embroideries of Lyons, the laces and cambrics of Valenciennes and Brussels, the cottons of Rouen, the muslins of St Quentin, the gloves and fans of Paris, became famous all the world over.

Although in society Bonaparte took the lead as became the Chief of the State, setting the example of liberal hospitality, his private life was still on a modest scale. The Consular Court, "not quite a Court, but no longer a camp," as a well-bred diplomatist styled it, was long organised on very simple lines. There were as yet no great functionaries, no ladies-in-waiting; aides-de-camp, ushers, and *maîtres d'hôtel* sufficed for the small ceremonial maintained. On great occasions no expense was spared, but a rigid and exact economy controlled his home; Bonaparte took Duroc to task



Naparte Premier Consul
Remettant l'Épée dans le fourreau après la Paix Générale

Gravé d'après le tableau de M. David, par M. Goussier, chez M. Lefebvre, rue d'Orléans, N. 10.

Paris chez M. la Bibliothèque Nationale.

sharply about the totals of the house-books, and watched every item. He valued money, partly from inherited Italian thriftiness, still more because he had once felt the bitter sting of poverty. In this respect Josephine was his exact opposite, and his despair. She was a reckless spendthrift, fair game for everyone, robbed on all sides, taking no account of cost, and always heavily in debt. There is a well-known story of Napoleon's detection of a deficit in his wife's budget, and setting Duroc to find out how much she owed. The amount was £24,000, whereupon the Emperor gave a cheque for £40,000 to pay all in full, but ordered that certain tradespeople who had encouraged Josephine's extravagance should be forbidden to enter the palace. His control of all expenditure, public and private, was of the most minute and searching character. He was most severe with contractors whose estimates were too high; he insisted on renewing the velvet and cloth tapestries of his palaces with stuff and cotton, "which will wear better"; he brought an action against the dyer who gave a bad colour to the hangings for St

Cloud. No wonder that Louis XVIII., on returning to the Tuileries and finding all in such apple-pie order, should have exclaimed, "He was a good tenant—this Napoleon!" In his own personal expenses the most rigid economy was observed. He laid down the number of coats—five of uniform, two for hunting—to be ordered for him every three years, and their price. His wardrobe contained four dozen flannel waistcoats—of which he wore one a week—four dozen pocket-handkerchiefs—and he allowed himself twelve weekly; every item of washing, cleaning, the provision of shoes, silk stockings, perfume, was exactly calculated, with the plain warning that nothing should be bought without His Majesty's approval.

With all this estimable parsimony, he was lavishly generous in his gifts. He set up his favourites in housekeeping with large presents in cash; gave Junot a residence and £4000 for furniture; paid Lasalle's debts over and over again. Davoust had two millions from him. Certainly, in all this he was dealing with other people's money, of which he was called to render no account.



JOSEPHINE

(From a Miniature by Isabey)

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A not unpleasing picture has been preserved of the inner life of the Bonapartes in these early days. No state was kept up at the Tuileries, as has been said ; still, there was more formality than at Malmaison, Josephine's country seat and a very favourite residence. Visitors at the Tuileries were only introduced at stated hours. Duroc or Rapp was in attendance. When Madame Junot was first presented she found a small family party : Josephine at her tapestry (she was indefatigable with her needle, and made all the furniture-covers for Malmaison), the First Consul with his hands behind him and his back to the fire, Eugène and Hortense Beauharnais also in the room. Meneval, when about to take up the post of private secretary, was received by Josephine with charming affability and kept to dinner. Bonaparte was equally kind when he came in ; the dinner lasted only twenty minutes, and the small party then adjourned to the drawing-room, where, after a quarter of an hour's talk, the First Consul slipped away. Nothing could be more modest than the meal, more simple than Bonaparte's fare.

A couple of dishes, a little Chambertin diluted with water, and a single cup of coffee, plain poached eggs, salad of white beans, polenta, Parmesan cheese. When he was Emperor and in the field, he regulated the table of the Headquarters' Staff: "Soup, bouilli, a roast joint, and salad—no dessert."

At Malmaison the life was that of any well-to-do bourgeois family in the country. The house was simply furnished, the company small, and everyone came and went as he or she pleased. The ladies breakfasted together alone at 11 a.m. The First Consul never showed till dinner-time; he spent the whole day in his study, which communicated with a small private garden, where he could walk while still dictating or discussing affairs. Dinner was at 6 p.m., and in the long evenings he would waste an hour in playing games or running about like a boy. Air and exercise were necessary to him, and if kept from his garden by rain or other cause he chafed and showed ill-temper at dinner: when the weather was fine and warm the table was laid on the lawn. Indoors, after

dinner, he talked freely, often rudely, and was fond of joking with his old comrades about early indiscretions, especially if their wives were present. He liked to tell stories—ghost stories—and had the Italian gift of improvisation. He retired to bed early, and was often read to sleep by Josephine, who had a soft voice and read well.

Weekly, on Wednesdays, there was a grand dinner at Malmaison; the guests carefully selected officials and their wives, the ladies always of unspotted reputation. Bonaparte assumed great outward austerity as regards morals; he sought to revive respect for domestic virtue and to restore the tone of society. After these great dinners there were amateur theatricals. The performers were found among the staff and *habitués* of the house. Bourrienne was the best actor in the company—even the professionals complimented him; Madame Murat Bonaparte, at that time very beautiful, often played well but spoke with a bad accent; Hortense Beauharnais was an excellent actress; her brother Eugène also; and Madame Junot, General

Junot and General Lauriston. The First Consul chose the plays, and, as the company improved, made them play ambitious pieces such as *The Barber of Seville*, and Regnard's *Lovers' Follies*. Bonaparte was a great patron of the stage, a constant attendant at the Paris theatres, and on friendly terms with Talma and the chief actors of the day. These were the relaxations of a hard-worked public man, and the First Consul was in this respect the most remarkable the world has ever seen. His powers of work were phenomenal and almost incredible. He wore out everyone, statesmen, senators, secretaries; presided at special meetings from 10 p.m. to 5 a.m., kept Councillors of State by his desk from 9 a.m. till 5 p.m. Sometimes an exhausted official fell asleep, and the First Consul would rouse him, reminding him that it was only two in the morning, and that they must earn their pay. He could continue for thirteen hours at a stretch without a sign of fatigue, constantly varying the subjects he dealt with; the new one, however momentous, did not occupy him to the exclusion of the old, to which he

returned as though he had never dropped it. According to his own description, his knowledge was stored away in his brains as in drawers, which he could open or shut at will. "I am always at work," he said of himself, "all the time, at dinner, in the theatre. I wake up at night in order to resume work." And when he woke like this, after barely an hour's sleep, his head was as clear as if he had slept all night. These were the occasions when some new project had arisen in his mind, when some plan had matured there and was ready for execution. Sometimes he would not have his secretaries aroused, but prepared work for them, noting and minuting papers in his own hand; at other times he would tell Meneval, "Come at one, or at four in the morning; we will work together," and he would turn out punctually in his white dressing-gown, with a coloured silk handkerchief round his head and snuff-box in hand. At such times his ideas developed as he dictated with abundance and extraordinary clearness; he spoke so fast that he was a terror to his secretaries, all of whom (and he could keep three or four

busy at once) had invented a species of shorthand of their own.

Napoleon's extraordinarily retentive memory for detail is a well-known quality in his marvellous understanding. He had every fact bearing upon the intricate business of government put by in his brain, but immediately available when required. He could deal with any subject with fuller knowledge than the official particularly charged with it. He could put his Ministers right and correct his clerks. In military matters he was most marvellous: knew the exact position of his armies, even when they were operating all over Europe, their numbers, *personnel* and *matériel*, men, animals, guns, stores, he had everything by heart; also the names of generals and other officials, their posts and regiments, the tonnage and armament of his ships of war; he remembered "country," facts of topography and distances, calculations made for marches, months and months ahead. He foresaw everything: anticipated what would happen, plainly predicted results, the positions he would occupy on a certain day, the battles he would win. He was an

expert in every department of war, "the best soldier in his army"; an artilleryman, a staff officer, administrator, financier, and, above all, the supreme commander, directing the most extensive operations. What that meant we shall realise better when we see him as the god of battles.

In these earlier years of the Consulate Bonaparte's labours were chiefly in civil administration. The Constitution of Brumaire had given him unlimited powers, and he turned them to excellent use. The institutions he gave France really govern the country to this day. The creation of the Bank of France was one of the first. Revival of national credit followed it; this and the greater regularity in taxation soon replenished the exchequer. The reform of the judicial system stands next in order, a reform which consisted in placing the patronage of all seats on the Bench unreservedly in the hands of the First Consul. The power thus assured was carried still further by the scheme of local government, the establishment of prefects, sub-prefects and mayors, a whole hierarchy of officials, who, whether in department, arrondisse-

ment, or commune, represented and multiplied the central authority throughout France; a system borrowed from the ancient arbitrary *régime* which nevertheless still obtains. The chief and most useful measure was, no doubt, the codification of the laws from which resulted the various codes—civil, commercial and penal—that under the generic title of the Code Napoléon are still the standard of conduct, not in France alone, but in Italy, Holland, Belgium and Germany. Bonaparte was proud of the codes, and always pretended to have created them, although other capable men laboured hard to perfect them in studies that extended over several years. France also owes the national system of education to the consular epoch, the perfect machinery of instruction, the three learned degrees—primary, secondary and superior—through which all students graduate under regulations framed and controlled by the central governmental authority.

The reconciliation of France with the Catholic Church was Bonaparte's doing. It came from mixed motives, chief among them his desire to detach the Pope from

the coalition of sovereigns, yet more to win the French priesthood from the Royalist cause. Bourrienne credits his master with religious sentiment, preserving a story that Bonaparte was greatly moved by the sound of church bells, and felt there must be a religion for the people. "Religion is useful to government; those who govern should use it to influence mankind. . . . For this some will call me a Papist. I am no such thing. I am no believer in creed. I was a Mohammedan in Egypt, I am a Catholic in France. I do not believe in religion. But the idea of a God!" Then came the oft-repeated famous speech: "Who made all that if there is no God?" And as he spoke he raised his hand to the star-lit heaven. He had been brought up a good Catholic, and so strong was early teaching that all through his life he crossed himself involuntarily at any sudden crisis.

The Concordat was signed and promulgated with great pomp in the Cathedral of Notre Dame in the presence of many who still disbelieved. Augereau, it is said, swore to himself all through the mass; Lannes protested against entering the

church ; Delmas, a Jacobin General, when asked what he thought of it, said the only thing to complete the show was the attendance of the million men who had been slain in pulling down what was now re-erected. Bonaparte himself described the Concordat as the vaccination of religion : "In fifty years there will be more religion than smallpox in France." Yet it served a great political purpose by securing the priests. One of the conditions of signature was that the priests, in taking the oath of fidelity to the State, should swear to reveal any plots against it that should come to their knowledge.

The Dictator was by no means secure upon the seat he had seized. He was surrounded with bitter foes : Republicans and Royalists, however antagonistic, were yet ready to make common cause against him. Plots and conspiracies were soon afoot, with the set purpose, more or less boldly conceived, of compassing the death of the First Consul. There was the affair of Chevalier, who contrived a clumsy machine which he could not complete for want of funds ; the conspiracy of the Corsicans,

Ceracchi and Arnea, who were to stab Bonaparte on the steps of the Opera House, a miserable business, promptly betrayed by one of the conspirators and easily controlled. These attempts were attributed to a gang known as the *Enrages*, the refuse of Revolutionary days — poor, penniless irreconcilables, who wished to emulate the success of the great adventurer and put themselves in his place.

A much more serious matter was the explosion of the infernal machine in the Rue St Nicaise. This attempt narrowly missed complete success. It was admirably planned by resolute men, the Royalists of La Vendée, who were amply provided with funds, and could command the services of devoted agents. The prime movers were St Regent, who had been a naval officer, and Limoëlan, who had fought in La Vendée; they were both in direct communication with the emigrant Princes in England. St Regent improved upon Chevalier's plan, and contrived a better machine, a barrel filled with powder, shot and hand-grenades, to which was attached a slow match. A careful calculation was

made of the time Bonaparte's carriage would take to cover the distance between the Tuileries and the Rue St Nicaise, and the match lighted accordingly. But the coachman drove faster than usual; more, he turned aside at seeing the barrel on its cart, and got past before the explosion, which killed many lives, but spared the First Consul.

Although not wanting in personal courage, Bonaparte was greatly upset by these dangers. The penalties of promotion to high place were made plainly apparent, and the implacable enmity of those who resented it. His reprisals were sharp, yet they were wrongly directed. Fouché's police soon tracked down the real culprits, and proved the Royalist origin of the plot. It suited Bonaparte to punish the Jacobins, who were really blameless in this affair. He feared them most of all his foes, and he made this last attempt an excuse for crushing the party. A hundred and thirty persons, whom he knew to be entirely innocent, were proscribed and sent to perish in the pestilential swamps of Cayenne.

The last blow aimed at his uncrowned

sovereignty was in the celebrated conspiracy of Georges and Pichegru, a movement really controlled and directed by the man who was to have been its victim. We have now abundant proof that Bonaparte was possessed from the very first of accurate news of the proposed plot. It was, no doubt, originated in London, where a consular spy, Mehée de la Touche, who served both sides, persuaded the British Government and the exiled Princes that Bonaparte must fall before a Republican and Royalist combination. Every step taken was, however, reported to Paris. The First Consul knew what to expect and how to meet it. "I never ran any real danger," he wrote his representative in Milan, M. de Melzi; "my police had its eye on all their machinations."

The plot, indeed, promised to serve his hidden purpose; it might be made to involve Moreau, whom he detested not merely as his military rival, but as his probable heir if he fell from power. Through it he might strike a shrewd blow at Bourbon pretensions and ascend the throne himself. Overtures had been made to Moreau by the conspirators; he was the most prominent

member of the expiring independent party in France. But he did not fall in with the proposals. Bonaparte's police have admitted that he remained a staunch Republican, who despised the Bourbons and had no sympathy with La Vendée. Indeed, the Concordat and the creation of the Legion of Honour had drawn him to the Consulate. The closest watch upon him could not prove him guilty of evil intentions. Many traps were laid for him without success. In the same way ample rope was given the real conspirators, who spent months in Paris, their presence, seemingly, unsuspected, although such neglect must have been wilful in a police so penetrating as is that of Paris. As an actual fact, their arrival was fully known; their every movement closely watched and duly reported to the First Consul; "but there need be no hurry to arrest them," was his reply. The plot would then have terminated, and with it all the possibilities that were expected; not the least of them being the hope to convict England of complicity through her representatives abroad. Many minor arrests were made, however, as the days passed; the



prisons of Paris were filled with subaltern agents, but the great counterstroke still tarried. Pichegru had come over—and Georges; the method of attack was known: no secret assassination, but an open conflict with Bonaparte surrounded by his guards. And yet no strong measures were taken, for Moreau was not yet compromised; the Princes, one or more, who were expected to head the movement, still hesitated to leave their comfortable English shelter.

Moreau had, in fact, refused to join in the conspiracy. It was so stated explicitly in a confession extracted from one of the prisoners, who declared that the plot must therefore fail. Yet upon this confession Moreau was arrested. So weak was the evidence against him that it was thought wise to suspend the law of trial by jury, or no convictions would have been possible. Now, too, Pichegru and Georges were taken—as they might have been long before—and both freely admitted that they meant to attack the First Consul in the street. But the great capture was missed; the royal Prince through whom Bonaparte might strike terror into the Bourbons and warn

them against any further attempts at his ejection. Upon whom could he lay his heavy hand? Where else find a suitable victim? The answer was afforded by the murder of the Duc d'Enghien.

This inoffensive princelet was living at Eltenheim, a few miles from Strasbourg, but in the territory of Baden, where he gave up his days to sport. At midnight on March 15, 1804, he was seized by a party of dragoons and hurried to Paris. Five days later he was arraigned before a military commission in the Fort Vincennes, found guilty on his own admission of having borne arms against the Republic, and then shot, out of hand.

Great efforts have been made to absolve Napoleon from the guilt of this atrocious murder, which he planned entirely himself. It has been pretended that the Duke was mistaken for a mysterious person, the much-looked-for Prince who never came to Paris, whose description was accurately known, and was entirely different from the victim's, while it was clearly shown on another occasion to be Pichegru himself. Savary, the chief agent in the affair, said afterwards

that the First Consul was horrified at the haste displayed, and declared that the sentence of the court should have been suspended until the prisoner had been interrogated by a judge. No such subterfuges can be accepted now, even if they ever imposed on the credulous. There was no accident or confusion, no hurry or mistake in the tragedy of Vincennes. Everything had been deliberately and minutely prepared in advance—the selection of the jailer, a confidential person no other than Harel, who had betrayed the Corsican conspiracy in 1800; the substitution of a military for the ordinary civil tribunal, of devoted soldiers blindly obeying their mandate to convict after no proper form of trial, the approval of the death sentence, which was signed in advance on a blank sheet. The very grave in the moat was already dug when the hapless youth passed the gates of the fortress.

Napoleon's apologists declare that he was greatly grieved and agitated when this cowardly crime was being perpetrated. Meneval describes the family party at Malmaison, and the gloom that over-

shadowed all—Josephine with moist eyes, the suite whispering privately together in a distant gallery, Bonaparte silent and absorbed, vainly seeking to read a book. Others say that he roamed alone through the woods for hours, terribly depressed and disturbed. Thiers, in his History, declares that during the week he hardly did any business or dictated a single letter. Yet this at least is an error, for an examination of his correspondence shows he dictated twenty-seven big, voluminous, and minute despatches between March 15 and the 23rd, and on the 20th, the very day he was most distressed, he sent off seven. So little was he really affected that he wrote his brother Joseph, “I cannot repent of my decision. . . . This was the only means I had of leaving no doubt as to my intentions, and of annihilating the hopes of the partisans of the Bourbons. . . . I shall never be tranquil on the throne while the Bourbons exist, and this Bourbon is one the less. . . . If what I have done were still to be done, I would do it again, and if I had a favourable opportunity I would get rid of the rest.”

All Europe was shocked by this murder,

the infamy of which still remains as the darkest stain upon the character of Napoleon. If the crime passed uncriticised at home, it was because public opinion could find no voice in France, gagged by the new despotism.

Bonaparte now resolved to assume the purple of irresponsible power, as the best weapon against fresh attacks from within and without. He was already Consul for life, and he now took the title of Emperor, a military rank in its origin, and well adapted to the master of many legions, who was so soon to use them for his aggrandisement and the consolidation of his empire. A subservient Senate with but one dissentient voice, Carnot's, laid the crown at his feet on May 18, 1804, but his Imperial Majesty, having deigned to accept it, postponed formal coronation until he had humbled England.



CHAPTER VII

BOULOGNE AND AUSTERLITZ—1804-1805



“**N**apoleon are fond of toys, and are led by them.” So Napoleon answered to those who opposed the institution of the Legion of Honour and spoke slightly of it as an empty bauble. He was inordinately fond of such toys himself, and played with them to his heart’s content to swell the pomp and circumstance of his brand-new Empire. It is almost pitiable to read the long list of great offices created by this degenerate

Republican, this *parvenu* promoted so soon to such dizzy heights of grandeur; to note the infinite pains he took to organise the ceremonial of his Court. For himself he became the "brother" of Emperors and "cousin" of Kings; his letters ended with a formula copied from the correspondence of the *Grand Monarque*. He invented the most sonorous, but often grotesque and absurd, titles for his family, his friends and supporters. His former colleagues in the Consulate became Arch-Chancellor and Arch-Treasurer, with the address of Most Serene Highness; one brother, Joseph, became Grand Elector; another, Louis, Grand Constable; the sisters were Princesses; on Madame Letitia the highest yet the simplest of all titles was conferred—that of Madame Mère. What higher rank could woman have than that of the Mother of Cæsar? Numerous high functionaries were appointed to maintain the dignity of the Imperial *régime*: Grand Chamberlain, Grand Almoner, Grand Marshal, Grand Master of the Ceremonies; a host of lesser officials also, such as pages, maids-of-honour, ladies-in-waiting and of the palace. M. de

Rémusat, one of the old *noblesse*, was called in to assist with his advice on ceremonials, but Napoleon saw to every detail, the costumes and uniforms, the breadth of embroideries, the shape of hats, the length of the ladies' elaborate trains. He devised his own coronation robes and the whole programme for that important ceremony, to sanction which the Holy Father, not without protest and misgiving, was brought in person from Rome. But Napoleon would only be crowned by his own hands; he cried solemnly, as he put the crown on his head, "God has given it to me; woe to him who dares to touch it!"

The army, of course, his most favourite plaything, although certainly no toy, was not overlooked in the distribution of new dignities. He surrounded his throne with his best soldiers, raised to the highest rank he could utilise to do them honour. There had been Marshals of France in times past, and it was natural they should be revived in a *régime* based upon his strong arm and military prestige. Not only was he pleased to reward his old companions-in-arms, the lieutenants, who had served him or France—



(From an Engraving after the Picture by F. Gerard)

and the first creation of marshals included Murat, Berthier, Masséna, Lannes, Soult, Brune, Ney, Augereau, Moncey, Mortier, Davoust, Jourdan, Bernadotte also, thanks to his brother-in-law, although not free from the taint of friendship with Moreau—but four honorary marshals were made in the persons of Kellermann (the elder), Perignon, Lefebvre and Serrurier. Only the Army of the Rhine, Moreau's army, was entirely unrepresented.

From the moment of his accession to power, Napoleon had found his chief pleasure in perfecting the great manslaying machine he was soon to direct with such incomparable skill. He loved his fortnightly reviews on the *Carrousel* or great courtyard of the Tuileries; and held one the very day of his installation as First Consul. The spectacle was splendid. Troops of all arms—horse, foot and guns, conscripts and veterans—stood there side by side, so that the one might take example by the other, and the martial spirit be raised to the highest pitch. Every regiment in the service came to Paris in turn, in order to appear at these parades. The First Consul arrived

with a numerous and brilliant staff in new and resplendent uniforms ; he was attended by the War Minister, the Governor of Paris, the General commanding the First Division, the Commissary General, all the great officers concerned in the military administration. Sometimes he rode down the line on his favourite grey Arab Le Désiré ; more often he dismounted and made a most minute and lengthened inspection, lasting five or six hours. He talked freely with all ranks, both officers and men, encouraging the latter to speak, to put forward their grievances. "Conceal nothing from me, suppress no complaints of your superiors. I am here to do justice to all, and the weakest is best entitled to my protection." He questioned them individually on their campaigns, on the scars they showed ; he recognised and rewarded those who had served with him, often corrected injustice and seeming slight by giving immediate promotion, or the coveted cross from his own breast. The pains he took to be *au fait* with all details were immense.

It was by such acts as these, honourable and natural enough in a great commander,

that he reached the hearts of his troops and won their unstinting devotion, to an extent that perhaps no other leader has inspired. They learned to believe in him as a god, to cry with honest Junot, "This man is a supernatural being." In later years he was less assiduous, but the fascination survived. It was a legacy left by thousands of brave souls who had perished in his service, and the tradition was maintained by thousands more as ready to give him their lives. But the enthusiasm was at its highest point when he reached the apogee of his power. The weapon that France had fashioned, first for self-defence and then blindly made over to the man who had enslaved her, was so set and sharpened by him that it was now fit for any fight. It was too much to expect that this great captain and *condottière*, the absolute soldier of fortune, should forbear to use it. Already indeed, and before he became Emperor, he was looking around like Alexander and preparing to conquer the world.

The treaty of Amiens had been almost a farce; its provisions were observed by neither side. England had not surrendered Malta,

although Bonaparte declared he would rather see her in the heart of Paris. France annexed new territories. George III. called the peace experimental, and the First Consul considered it no more than a short armistice. There was continual strife and bickering between the two countries. A newspaper war raged in which the Free Press of England showed much irritating license in lampooning Bonaparte. The old rivalry between England and France was more bitter than ever. The rupture came abruptly, and after an unseemly scene with the British Ambassador, in which, however, the great Corsican actor only played a part for the express purpose of hastening the crisis. Yet the first reckless steps taken by the First Consul showed deep irritation : contrary to the custom of civilised nations, he detained all British subjects he could catch in France, even tourists and non-combatants ; he laid hands on the sacred persons of the diplomatic body ; he seized Hanover, the appanage of the English Kings, and, at the risk of a permanent quarrel with Prussia, established himself in the heart of Germany ; he proclaimed the commercial blockade which was

to close Europe to English-made goods, and nearly brought ruin to all Continental trade.

The duel with England was to be to the death, and, indeed, it was not ended till Napoleon fell after Waterloo. He entered upon it with all the eagerness of one who counted confidently upon success. He was but imperfectly informed of the strength and character of the nation he challenged; to the last he never fully realised the measure of our naval power, nor of the probable resistance he might expect from a sturdy race defending hearth and home. So little did he know of England that he believed a first victory on its soil would rally to him all who hated "oligarchic government," although, as Lanfrey puts it, he would not have attracted a single beggarman in the street.

No doubt he was supported in this by other opinions. Years back, when named by the Directory to the command of the "Army of England," Moreau had written him (March 27, 1798): "There are few Frenchmen who have not been desirous of an invasion of England, and there are few who do not feel confident of the success

of the expedition since you have taken command of it." In France the project, when openly announced in 1803, was hailed with delight. "The idea of a conquest of England fired the general imagination," Madame de Rémusat wrote. She went with the imperial party in the progress to Brussels, and saw at Amiens the triumphal arch inscribed "The Road to England." His naval officers alone doubted, and at first essayed, but vainly, to point out the hazardous nature of the enterprise. They were alive to the incompleteness and inefficiency of the French navy, the meagre character of French marine resources; they knew better the strength of their enemy, the marked superiority of the British at sea. "Our masts are bad, and our sails," wrote Villeneuve to Decrès; "so is the rigging, the officers also, and the ships' companies." "Napoleon's fleets," wrote Nelson to Collingwood, "suffer more damage in one night than ours in a year," and, again speaking of the French naval officers to the Admiralty, he says, "Those gentlemen are not accustomed to the storms which we have defied for one-and-twenty



NAPOLEON RECEIVING AT ST CLOUD THE SENATUS-CONSULTUM PROCLAIMING HIM EMPEROR,
MAY 18, 1804

months without losing a spar." They were well aware indeed of their shortcomings, but after their first protests, so rudely received by their imperious master, they lapsed into silence, meaning to do their best, but with little hope of a favourable issue.

It has been stated seriously and strongly that Napoleon was never really committed to the invasion; that the formation of the great camp of Boulogne was no more than an excuse for keeping a large army together and training it for more feasible Continental conquests. This is the line adopted by admirers who cannot otherwise explain the strangeness of his general policy at this period. Was it possible that this commanding genius would dare affront all Europe, as he did, to encourage a fresh coalition against him, at a time when he was about to lock up the flower of his army in the islands beyond the sea—not so remote, of course, as Egypt, but possibly as inaccessible? His absence from France in 1799 might be prejudicial to his cause, but in 1805 it would spell absolute ruin. Did he hope to effect his purpose with such ease

and despatch that he might subjugate England in a few weeks, and return victorious to face the European armies that would surely invade France when the great army of Boulogne was across the Channel? In this dilemma his eulogists can only conclude that the whole project was a feint; the alternative was to convict Napoleon of a want of ordinary common sense.

Yet there can be no sort of doubt that he was thoroughly in earnest. It is proved by the elaboration of means to the end in view: the thousands of orders he issued, the schemes and counter-schemes, the time he spent in camp, the extent of his preparations and their costliness; and again, by his deep personal anxiety for his project, exhibited hour after hour, and increased in intensity as the moment of fruition approached. Let us realise Lanfrey's picture of Napoleon on the cliff at Boulogne waiting for Villeneuve, a portrait as exact as a photograph, and say whether the whole project was a myth devised to cajole and to throw dust in the eyes of Europe. He had written that unhappy admiral on August 22, 1805: "This, I hope, will find



NAPOLÉON PRESENTING THE EAGLES TO THE GRAND ARMY IN THE CHAMP DE MARS, DECEMBER 5, 1804
"Soldiers, here are your standards : those eagles will always serve you for a rallying point. . . You will swear to sacrifice your
lives in their defence, and by your courage to preserve them ever in the path to victory."
(From the Picture by David in the Versailles Gallery)

you at Brest. Hurry on—do not lose a moment—come with our combined squadrons, and England is ours.” “Now,” says that historian, “he watched the horizon incessantly, passing through all the harrowing emotions of hope and fear, of uncertainty—most difficult of all to bear. For months all had been prepared, in Boulogne and in the neighbouring ports. The monster flotilla waited only the signal; day after day the army went through their embarkation drill,” nothing was wanting but Ville-neuve, and he never came.

There was no make-believe in all this. We might doubt the military preparations, which would and did serve for the campaign of Austerlitz, but the naval must have been intended exclusively for invasion. The vast sums spent upon the flat-bottomed boats that were to serve as bridges; the great efforts made to manufacture them in every shipbuilding yard of the French coasts—these surely were for the specific purpose of invasion. The feverish haste with which the navy was strengthened when the first idea of an unprotected flotilla was improved into the joint action

of fleet and transports; the recruitment of the navy by the press-gang; and the contingents forcibly raised in independent maritime states—there was no pretence about these. In a despatch to Marshal Brune in July 1804, he writes: “I have at my disposal 120,000 men and 3000 launches; we only await a favourable wind to plant the Imperial Eagle on the Tower of London. Time and Destiny alone know what will happen”—language, surely, that implied a set purpose, for there was no reason to deceive Brune. Again, the express orders sent to the Admirals, Bruix, Decrès, Gantheaume, Villeneuve, the exact combinations and movements of their squadrons, and the great results he looked for, would hardly have been the work of imagination, even in this colossal deceiver.

Many smaller matters plainly endorse this view: the selection of daring privateer captains to harry the English coast and seize fishermen and hobblers who could give information of the harbours between the Thames and Portsmouth; the creation of a body of interpreter-guides; the enlistment of discontented Irishmen into a

foreign legion. The troops were trained to row, and made to work at the oar two hours daily; a poetaster was commissioned to compose a song, "Le Chant du Départ," to be sung in camp; and prizes were offered to soldiers who would venture out on yard-arms; the theatres were to produce plays such as *William the Conqueror*, to stimulate public feeling. Perhaps the most positive fact of all was the medal struck beforehand, which was to be issued in London after the conquest, a rare *objet d'art*, but still to be seen in some collections. On one face is the Emperor's head, laurel-crowned; on the other, "Descente en Angleterre. Frappée à Londres, 1804." This triumph by anticipation has yet to be accomplished, although England and its people should not count too surely upon the causes that guaranteed her safety then. Steam has greatly altered the conditions of naval warfare, and there is nothing nowadays impossible in Napoleon's boast that if he were master of the Channel for six hours England would cease to exist. He looked for the happy concurrence of natural allies—night, fogs, heavy weather in order

to pass his flotilla over—advantages “he must be mad to expect,” as Nelson said, but their assistance would not be necessary now.

On the 23rd August 1805 he still hoped; two days later he resolved to abandon the projected invasion; and on the 27th the march from Boulogne upon Austria was begun. He was checked ingloriously in one direction, but by prompt action in another he might escape ridicule, and he had very strong cards to play. The project of invasion had put into his hands a perfect army, the best in Europe, held compactly together and readily available for war. It is asserted, as has been said, that this alternative of springing without warning upon his Continental foes had been always a second string to his bow. A shrewd blow might thus be struck at one before the second should join her. Austria lay exposed, with forces, as usual, widely scattered, while her ally, Russia, was miles in distance, months in time, to the rear.

Whatever mistake and misapprehension may have falsified Napoleon's plan of invasion, in the military operations that succeeded that abortive attempt he was at



THE EMPRESS JOSEPHINE

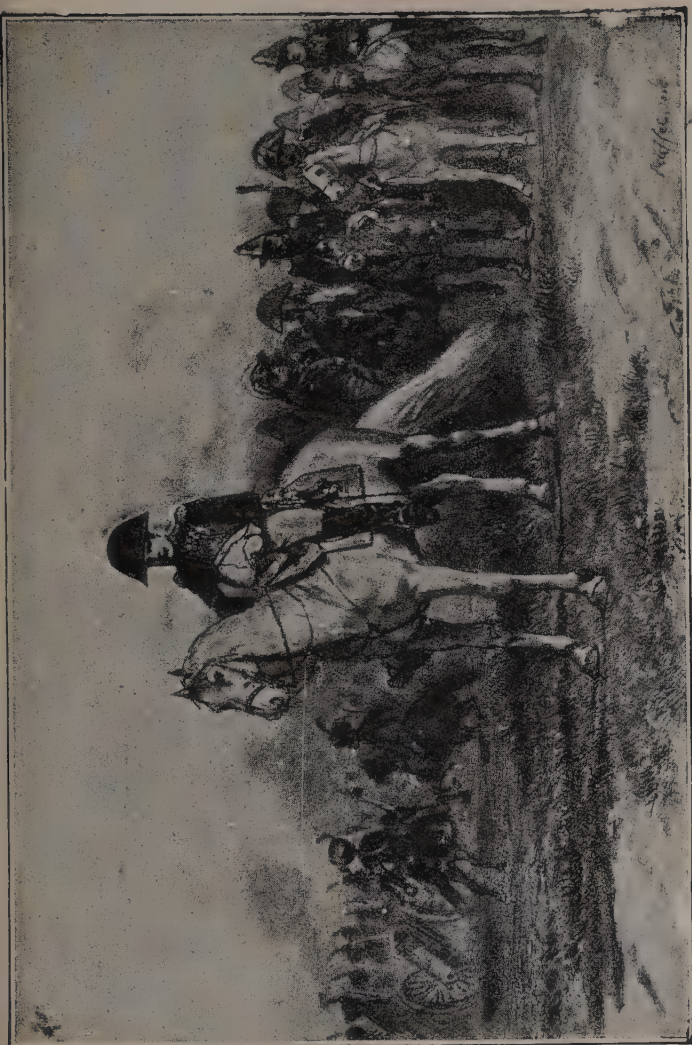
(From the Portrait by Gerard in the Versailles Gallery)

his best. He was at last in a situation he could control, engaged in his own trade. As he himself said, he was never so happy as in the field. No wonder, for he was a past master in the art of war, and he played that most chanceful and exciting game with uncommon skill. The conditions at the outset of the campaign of Austerlitz were, no doubt, greatly in his favour, but yet he made the most of them. His strategy was bold yet unerring, following the soundest principles, and practised with extraordinary promptitude and decision, as will be seen.

Austria meant to take the offensive in due course, and had two armies in the field. The strongest, 100,000 men, was in Italy, under the Archduke Charles, opposed to Masséna, but far outnumbering him; the other, under Mack, 76,000, was on the Inn, covering Vienna, but intended to advance through Swabia when reinforced by the Russians. Napoleon's plan was to hold Masséna to the defensive, occupying the Archduke Charles, while the army of Boulogne, transferred secretly and rapidly into Central Europe, struck through Mack straight at Vienna. Its movement was

concealed by every possible means. Every artifice was used to protract negotiations until it had completed its long march, and twenty-six days after leaving the sea-coast it arrived on the Rhine. Speed was of the utmost importance. Napoleon intended to fight with the legs, not the arms, of his troops. All the passages of this great river were in French hands, and Napoleon crossed at Mayence, Spire and Mannheim. Now Bernadotte, coming from Hanover, reached Würzburg; and Marmont, coming from Holland, had joined the Grand Army, as it was called for the first time by its imperial leader, who organised it into seven army corps, each composed of two or three infantry divisions, a brigade of cavalry, and a small proportion of artillery.

The 1st corps was commanded by Bernadotte, the 2nd by Marmont, the 3rd by Davoust; Soult had the 4th, Lannes the 5th, Ney the 6th, Augereau the 7th. Murat commanded the corps of cavalry. The Imperial Guard, under the immediate orders of the Emperor, was in reserve, and a Bavarian army of 25,000 was soon detached from the Coalition to throw in its



NAPOLÉON

(From a Lithograph by Raffet)

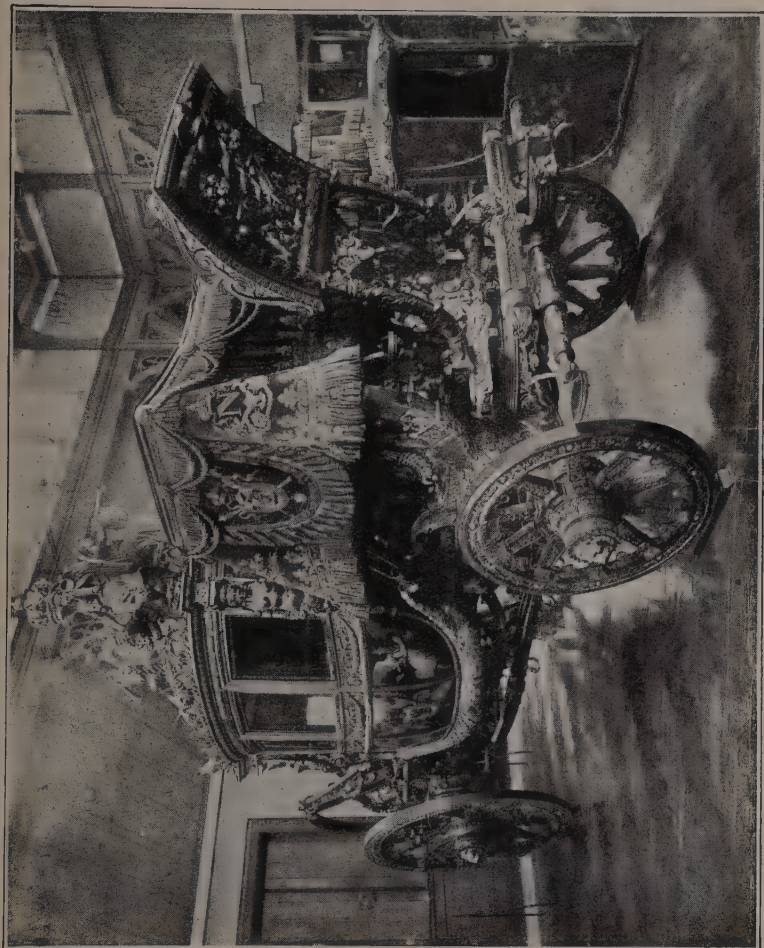
lot with the French. The total of the Grand Army amounted to upwards of 200,000 men.

Meantime Mack, going to his fate, had advanced from the Inn and occupied Ulm from September 18. He was quite ignorant of the near approach of the French, and as late as October 8, complacently reported that his army could not be better or more effectually posted. Already, by this date, Napoleon's forces were closing round him in greatly superior numbers, having already cut his communications with his base. For on October 6, hearing that French detachments had appeared in Bavaria, Mack sent General Kienmayer towards Ingoldstadt to hold the bridges over the Danube. But there three whole corps—those of Davoust, Marmont and Bernadotte—fell upon Kienmayer, and drove him back in confusion upon Munich. The complete occupation of Bavaria followed; the French armies were in force on both banks of the Danube, and Ulm was enclosed.

Napoleon's headquarters were at Donauwörth on the 7th, and he was quite master of the situation. "The enemy must be

quick, if he would escape complete destruction," were the significant words of his order of the day. Mack met the danger by reversing his front. Hitherto he had faced west, towards the Black Forest; now he turned his back on the Black Forest and faced east. The French were on that side between him and home. Indeed, every line of retreat was menaced by the splendid strategy of his opponent. Napoleon had made only one mistake. He had left a loophole of escape by the position of Albeck, on the left of the Danube, which was insufficiently guarded, and by which Mack, with a determined effort, might have cut his way through. But the Emperor always believed Mack would retreat on the Tyrol, and Dupont was exposed to the whole weight of the Austrian army. Mack, using only one corps, drove back Dupont, but made no further effort to get out; and Napoleon soon sent Ney to close the gap by crossing at Elchingen in strength, which brought on the battle of that name. The Austrians escaping towards Bohemia were forced to lay down their arms.

Mack's position at Ulm was now desperate.



NAPOLEON'S STATE COACH

Soult had crossed the Iller and, reaching Biberach, cut off all retreat to the Tyrol; Marmont had come up; Ney captured the heights above Ulm, and the investment was completed with 100,000 men. Napoleon now sent an ultimatum to Mack, threatening to put the whole garrison to the sword "as he had done at Jaffa." The luckless Austrian General tried to temporise, hoping still for support from the advancing Russians, and offered to capitulate on the 25th October if not rescued before. But on the 19th he learned that the Russians were not yet on the Inn, and he laid down his arms. Next day, the *debris* of his army, some 24,000, marched out of Ulm with the honours of war. But this surrender does insufficient justice to the fullness of Napoleon's triumph. Between the last days of August and the 20th October he had marched from Boulogne to the Danube, and, at no great cost, simply by masterly combinations and successful strategy, had overwhelmed the enemy's forces. The capitulation of Ulm gave him 60,000 prisoners, with eighteen general officers, eighty-four standards, and 1200 guns. Vienna was at his mercy.

Fortune seldom comes with both hands full. The glory of Ulm was quickly balanced by the defeat of Trafalgar, the news of which reached him when he was marching to meet the combined Austrians and Russians at Austerlitz. He showed no outward sign, says Berthier, who handed him the despatch. But he was profoundly moved, and he visited the whole of the blame of a catastrophe for which he himself was entirely responsible upon the gallant but luckless Admiral who had already failed him at Boulogne. It was under the express orders of the Emperor that Villeneuve—whom he loathed and loaded with abuse and invective, yet continued in command—issued from Cadiz to confront Nelson and the British fleet. The Emperor, with blind infatuation, still refused to believe in the inferiority of his navy; he would not tolerate the suggestions of a cautious and defensive warfare. He sent positive instructions to Villeneuve to fight; to leave Cadiz. “Nothing shall keep them there!” he wrote not many days after the capitulation of Ulm. That he thus sent his fleet to destruction may be excused as the error of a proud, haughty spirit, but that he



NAPOLEON
(After Chatillon)

should vent his displeasure upon the brave officer who obeyed but could not succeed, is another of the dark blots upon his character. Villeneuve, it is now gravely asserted, did not commit suicide, but was murdered at Rennes on his return from England, where he had suffered a brief detention as a prisoner of war. He was found stabbed to the heart; there were six wounds, one of which at least must have been inflicted after death. The dagger, too, which had been used was found at the distance of several paces from his body, where a dying man could not possibly have thrown it. The story runs that he found at Rennes a letter from Decrès, the Minister of Marine, harshly upbraiding him, and that he could not bear to live. Before the deed, he wrote a noble letter to his wife, giving his reasons for suicide. Yet the first letter is still in the possession of the Villeneuve family, and it is couched in kindly, affectionate terms. The second letter has never been seen. When Madame de Villeneuve asked for it, Fouché declared he had already sent it to her, and that it must have been lost in the post. Assuredly there are

grounds for classing this suicide with those of Pichegru and Wright.

It is pleasanter to turn to the battlefield on which Napoleon reigned supreme—to the great day of Austerlitz, the finest victory Napoleon ever won. The first Russian army had now appeared upon the theatre of war, and, in junction with the remnant of the Austrian forces, was waiting in Moravia to make a fresh appeal to arms. Napoleon was in a critical position. The Archduke Charles was in Hungary with 80,000 men; a second Russian army was at the heels of the first; Prussia, alienated, was about to join in coalition. Napoleon now was not unwilling to make peace. His overtures to the Czar had been badly received. When he proposed to send Savary to treat, the Russian Emperor replied in a letter addressed to the “Chief of the French Government.” Later, on the very eve of Austerlitz, Prince Dolgorouki offered terms on behalf of the Czar that Napoleon found simply insulting.

Now the allied forces, about 90,000 men, were based upon Olmutz. Napoleon, with 70,000 men, having Vienna as an intermediate base, but a very long way from



Le généralissime, l'empereur, à l'armée, le 26 octobre 1805.

Le généralissime, l'empereur, à l'armée, le 26 octobre 1805.

BATAILLE

D'AUSTERLITZ



Dedicé et présenté à son Excellence

l'Empereur, Madame Marie

présenté à la Bibliothèque Impériale

Imp. par les Bacheliers

se vend, à Paris chez Pierre Leclerc, Rue de la Harpe, N. 10.

home, was advancing upon Brunn to meet his enemy. Arrived there on the 20th, he rested till the 27th, then felt forward as far as Wischau and Austerlitz. His advance guard having been driven back from Wischau, Napoleon was satisfied that the enemy were approaching in force, and he fell back into a position along the Goldbach, some eight miles in front of Brunn. He seemed thus to have abandoned the still stronger position of the Pratzen plateau, at the far side of the Goldbach, which was now occupied by the Russian and Austrian armies, but he did so advisedly in pursuance of his tactical plan. He told his staff that from Pratzen he could only hope to win an ordinary victory ; his aim was to draw the enemy on in a determined effort to turn his right, his most vulnerable flank, attack on which would lay bare his communication with Vienna. "With any such extension of their left they would be open to a terrible counterstroke and lost beyond redemption."

The night before the action, Napoleon, having narrowly escaped capture when reconnoitring, wandered on foot through his camp, was recognised by the light of

the bivouac fires, and received with loud acclamations by his enthusiastic soldiers. Their bonfires strengthened the enemy in the belief that they were burning their straw huts preparatory to retreat. The attack was therefore developed early on the following morning, the 2nd December, with that extension on the left which Napoleon so eagerly expected. It was his intention to await events on this as well as on his left flank, which was securely posted under Murat and Lannes, while with his centre, under Bernadotte and Soult, he made a counter-attack upon the Pratzen plateau.

These last began the battle, and carried all before them, nearly destroying the divisions on march to strengthen the already extended Russian left. Lannes on the left fought an independent action, and held his ground with varying fortunes. There were fierce cavalry conflicts nobly contested, but at last the day was won by the French. Napoleon was thus victorious in his centre and on the left; but his right, on the most critical part of the field, was being hardly pressed, and Napoleon brought up his reserve of the Guard. Now came the critical hour.



INTERVIEW BETWEEN NAPOLEON AND FRANCIS II., EMPEROR OF
AUSTRIA, AFTER THE BATTLE OF AUSTERLITZ

(From the Picture by Prudhon in the Louvre)

Bernadotte's success had cut the allied army in two, its right and left extremities widely divided, and the Russian Guard nobly essayed to retrieve the battle by a furious attack on the centre. It was nearly successful, but, met by the opportune advance of the French Guard, was presently checked, and then overthrown by a magnificent charge of the cavalry of the Guard, under Rapp. Leaving Bernadotte to follow up, Napoleon, gathering in Soult's corps, the remainder of his cavalry and infantry, with his reserve artillery, hurried off to deal with the troops—a body of 30,000 men—so long engaged with Davoust. He took them in flank, entangled in the marshes and narrow roads about the Goldbach, and routed them utterly. They fled, seeking safety upon the frozen lake, the ice of which gave way under the artillery fire, and all who escaped shooting were drowned.

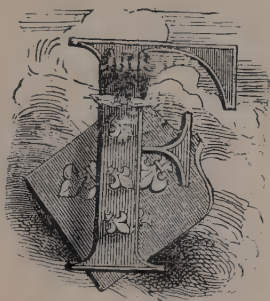
The battle was ended at 4 p.m. Never was victory more complete—defeat more overwhelming. The Allies lost 10,000 killed, 30,000 prisoners, 46 standards, and 186 guns. Napoleon's triumph was stupendous. Austerlitz effaced the memory

of the Boulogne fiasco, it counterbalanced Trafalgar, it showed him as a mighty man of war, for whose career of coming conquest no limits could be prescribed. No wonder that William Pitt, who lay stricken with mortal sickness, when he heard of Austerlitz, sighed, "Alas! my country," turned his face to the wall, and died.



CHAPTER VIII

“IMPERIAL CÆSAR”—1805-1809



IVE years of war followed the peace that had at last been broken at Austerlitz; and such wars! Wars waged on such a large scale and with such an abundance of means, such enterprise and genius, such triumphant results as the world has seldom seen. War, in 1806, with Prussia, so prompt and decisive that in less than a month she was

reduced to the status of a third-rate Power, prostrate and despoiled, partitioned between Saxony, Russia, and the new Napoleonic kingdom of Westphalia. War again with Russia, more creditable to her military character, but little less disastrous than that of 1805, and converting her into the humble and obedient ally of France; next with Spain and Portugal; the Peninsula invaded under specious pretences, first occupied, then held as conquered, with shameless breach of faith; another war with Austria, leaving her crippled, with the loss of access to the sea, of three millions of population and much territory, and compelled to purchase peace by the surrender of a Hapsburg Princess to the arms of the Corsican Emperor—thus seconding his scheme for divorce. These are the years of his greatest triumph, of his unquestioned political ascendancy, of unbroken military successes that constituted him the greatest general of that, or perhaps any, age. Let us examine briefly some of the chief stages of this astonishingly rapid and striking career of conquest.



NAPOLEON

(By Canova)

The campaign of Jena reproduces that of Austerlitz in many particulars. Prussia was all wrong throughout. She missed her best chance of action, and declared war too late and too soon. Too late, because in 1805 she might have done Napoleon infinite mischief by falling on his flank as he advanced into Austria; too soon in 1806, because (like Austria) she did not wait for the arrival of her Russian allies. Again, in her plan of campaign she resolved to take the offensive, when by holding the line first of the Elbe and then of the Oder she would have drawn Napoleon on through an inhospitable country at the worst season of the year, and then confronted him, concentrated and combined with her friends. But in her divided military councils, where senility fought with presumptuous youth, there was one point in common: that attack was better than defence. Napoleon had always won because he had always been allowed to take the initiative; to forestall him would be to deprive him of his most effective weapon. Besides, the traditions of the Great Frederick still threw a halo around

the army he had created ; it was still confidently believed that, although untried for half a century, with slow formal tactics and antiquated equipment, it would be more than a match, even single-handed, for the brilliant young general, so admirably supported by able lieutenants and troops flushed with recent victories.

In October 1806 Napoleon held his army compactly placed along the river Maine behind the Thuringian forest. On the far side were the Prussians at Erfurt, Weimar and Jena, with an advance guard pushed forward to Saalfeld watching the issues of the mountain passes. Napoleon had seven army corps with a cavalry corps, and the Imperial Guard, in all about 190,000. The Prussians, under their aged leader Brunswick, a veteran of the Seven Years' War, numbered 150,000, including the troops of Saxony and Würtemberg.

Both sides prepared to advance. The Prussian leaders, after much discussion, decided at length to move by a double line—false strategy that was never put in practice, for Napoleon burst upon them like a thunderbolt while they hesitated, and the

war was ended almost before it was begun. Of the various lines open to him he preferred that by his right, the most direct road to Berlin, and thrust his army, corps after corps, through the Thuringian passes—Soult and Ney to Baireuth and Hof, Bernadotte in the centre, Davoust, the cavalry, and the guard on the left, moving by Coburg to Grafenthal and Saalfeld. The mere direction of his advance threatened the Prussian communications with Berlin, and peremptorily ended the idea of taking the offensive. The enemy fell back at once and hastily, now making for the line of the Elbe. Brunswick reached the Saale on October 13, prepared to fight a great battle about Kosen, leaving Hohenlohe with one corps to cover his retreat. Napoleon found Hohenlohe at Jena, and thinking he had the whole Prussian army in front of him, resolved to attack. Davoust, further down the river, on the extreme French right, was ordered to force a passage at Kosen, and co-operate by the east bank on the Prussian rear. This brought on the battle of Auerstadt on the 14th, when Davoust with great gallantry attacked double his

numbers, and beat Brunswick completely. The same day Napoleon, being two to one, attacked Hohenlohe at Jena, and obtained a signal victory. "You cannot imagine the extent of this defeat," Berthier wrote Junot. "It is like magic, or to speak in the words of Scripture, the Hand of the Lord overthrew them."

A vigorous pursuit followed Jena. The Prussians had fled disorganised to the Elbe, which Davoust crossed at Wittenberg, not fifty miles from Berlin, on the 20th. All the great fortresses fell. Spandau was surprised, Berlin entered on the 25th, Stettin the 29th, Cüstrin the 31st. On November 8, Magdeburg, with a garrison of 22,000 and 700 guns, was taken by Ney with half the number; Murat, having forced Hohenlohe to surrender, galloped into Lübeck. Napoleon was absolutely master of Prussia. In one short month he had destroyed her army in the field, had driven the King from his capital, leaving him only the barren province of East Prussia, and a poor force of 25,000 disheartened troops. The country lay crushed and humiliated at the feet of her conqueror.

Napoleon had thus disposed of one-half of his Northern enemies. Russia remained, and her armies were now tardily, as at Austerlitz, advancing towards the Vistula. They must be met and beaten if Napoleon's supremacy in Europe was to be assured. England, as we know, remained defiant to the last, but he tried to fight her with other weapons, and it was from Berlin that he issued those famous decrees that were to kill British commerce by excluding her goods from the Continent. This, the great “Continental system” that failed so signally, forbade all trade with England; no English ship, no ship coming from an English or colonial port, could enter a French port without the penalty of seizure as prize. Even postal communication was stopped, letters to or from England were seized and destroyed; every Englishman found upon the Continent in countries that acknowledged the Napoleonic rule became a prisoner of war. Such bitter measures could only be met with equal hostility. War was made, and far more effectually, upon French commerce, so that soon the French flag was driven from the seas. The strict blockade

against British goods was evaded by a gigantic system of contraband smuggling, which became one of the most profitable of trades. The Custom Houses and their officers were hoodwinked or bought over; even the highest functionaries took bribes; English goods still reached Continental consumers, and were found in Napoleon's own palaces, but at the advanced prices all these manœuvres entailed. The Emperor appealed to the ladies of his court to aid him in his exclusion of the products that travelled through the country he hated. He begged them to prefer Swiss to Chinese tea, to drink chicory instead of Mocha coffee, to eat beet-root sugar, to eschew English stuffs and draperies. "Let them beware I do not catch them wearing dresses of English manufactures," he wrote Junot. This prohibition would have a double effect, he hoped; it would injure England and stimulate French production. But it failed signally, and France in the long run suffered far more than England from the Continental blockade. The climax of absurdity was reached in the coming campaign of Friedland, and the Hanse Towns, which had been laid



NAPOLEON

(From an Engraving by Rados, after J. B. Bosio)

under contribution for 200,000 pairs of shoes, 50,000 greatcoats and other clothing, were obliged to contract for them with English firms, so that battles were fought under the Emperor's eye by soldiers clad in uniforms that had been made at Halifax and Leeds.

Napoleon knew that the conflict with Russia would be serious, and that great efforts must be made if he was to secure success. He was prepared to take the initiative, although it was the winter season, and his troops had suffered severely already. His first act was to bring up reinforcements to consolidate his position, repair the fortresses, organise great dépôts of supply all along the road from France. He has had no superior as a military administrator, and his plans as seen in his multifarious and elaborate correspondence show how minutely he attended to every point, how he held every thread in his own hands. In anticipation of the demands of the coming campaign, he forestalled the conscription of 1807, and at once called up all recruits of that year. He levied enormous contributions on subject and friendly peoples—cash from Germany, newly confederated,

£24,000,000 ; from Italy, £1,200,000 ; from Spain, £2,880,000 ; from Portugal, £640,000 ; requisitions for warlike stores on others. He revised the arrangements of the army under his immediate orders in the field, especially for the cavalry, which would be largely used in the great plains of Poland and Eastern Prussia. A great dépôt was formed at Potsdam, in the extensive stables built by Frederick the Great, and here all the horses captured or bought were collected to be broken in and made into efficient cavalry. By these active measures the Grand Army was soon raised to an effective 300,000 men, of whom about half only were available for field operations, the rest being dispersed along the communications, or in hospital sick and wounded. With these 150,000 he now faced the Russians, and completed the subjugation of Europe. "The dice will decide the game," he wrote the poor King of Prussia, who had rashly declared that he still relied upon the Czar.

The opposing armies were very different in character and constitution. Napoleon had developed efficiency by every possible means ; the drill and tactics of the French

troops had been perfected under his own eye, guided by the experience gained in the last campaign. With his infinite capacity for taking pains, he had created regiments of grenadiers and voltigeurs; he had revised and improved the infantry formation, adopting a system based upon the intelligence of the rank and file and the practical knowledge of their regimental officers. At this period the *personnel* of the army was at its best; the ranks were filled with the fine old soldiers of the revolutionary wars, steady, self-reliant veterans, who had long made war their trade. They had the unbounded confidence in their officers that constant success must always give. These soldiers were a fine nucleus of strength, invaluable by their experience and their example. Scientific instruction had been lavished upon the officers of staff, artillery, and engineers; the highest skill was encouraged by the rewards that followed its display.

On the other hand, the Russian army was ill-organised and badly led. Although the men were strong, sturdy, constant in battle, and when on duty kept within

bounds, they were drunken, and without discipline in quarters. The regimental officers were lazy, ignorant, without military education; so that for all scientific work foreigners were engaged, between whom and the native officers there was much heartburning and ill-will. The training of the Russian troops was indifferent; the infantry tactics never went beyond bayonet attacks; the Cossack cavalry could not be depended upon for manœuvre, although excellent as irregulars. Organisation was hopelessly bad: brigades and divisions were not properly made up of the three arms; hospitals were few; an enormous host of camp-followers, including servants and retainers—as many as 200 per regiment—impeded free movement. Thus the natural courage of the Russian soldiery was sadly handicapped, although finely apparent on many a hard-fought field. They stood their ground with magnificent tenacity in the campaigns of 1806-7, and the battles of Eylau and Friedland bear witness to this. As Capectigue remarks, with Austrians and Prussians campaigns were decided in one or two great actions, when capitulation

and surrender followed ; with the Russians “there was nothing but to kill or be killed.” Victory was not secured without frightful carnage and the annihilation of almost the last man.

Napoleon began this fierce struggle with the occupation of Warsaw and an advance to the Vistula. He succeeded in driving his enemy back in sharp engagements at Pultusk and Golymin—the first fought and won by Lannes, the second by Davoust and Augereau. Now the winter set in with extreme severity—hard frosts alternated with sudden thaws ; the roads, knee-deep in mud, became nearly impassable for men or guns. The great distances and the terrible weather made the supply of the army most difficult, and the hospitals were crowded with the sick and wounded. Davoust’s corps were reduced to 15,000 men, Soult’s to 19,000 ; Augereau’s, further weakened by the desertion of stragglers and marauders, was only 7000 strong. Repose was absolutely essential for both the belligerents, and both went into winter quarters, where, under the active care of Napoleon, the French soon recovered health

and strength. Early in January 1807 the Russian General, Beningsen, resumed the offensive. Under cover of the network of lakes in East Prussia he hoped to surprise the French left, relieve Colberg, Dantzic and Graudenz, and securing the Lower Vistula, then await in winter quarters his expected reinforcements from Russia. This move was nearly successful; but Ney extricated the French left, and Napoleon, fathoming Beningsen's intentions, threw his whole army forward across the Vistula to intercept the enemy. On January 30 he quitted Warsaw, where he had kept his court, and next day, four days after the orders were issued, he was concentrated on Wittenberg. He continued to advance, and on the 6th came upon the Russians, now in retreat on Landsberg. They fought rearguard actions that day, and on the 7th were in position at Eylau, where he was brought to bay. A three-fold action followed. Eylau was taken by the French, re-taken by the Russians, then abandoned, and on the 8th the great battle was fought.

The victory in this terrible conflict was claimed by both sides. Napoleon, having

massed all his artillery in the centre, sent Augereau on to attack, with Davoust to follow when he came up on the right. Augereau marched under the fire of the concentrated Russian artillery, and was nearly destroyed. A heavy snowstorm now interposed a thick pall, and when it cleared an attempt to turn the French right would have been successful but for a desperate cavalry charge under Murat. The crisis of the action came with the appearance of the Prussian corps, under L'Estocq, on the left flank of the French. By this time Davoust began to be felt on the other flank, and he eventually established himself on the left of the Russian position. Ney was at the heels of L'Estocq, and he presently appeared upon the Russian right. With both flanks thus threatened, Beningsen drew off, leaving Napoleon in possession of the ground he had gained. His guard had not yet been engaged, while the Russians had thrown every regiment into the fight: he could therefore fairly claim to have had the best of it. Moreover, next day Beningsen fell back upon Königsberg, and the French cavalry followed, although too much ex-

hausted to pursue with great vigour. After a halt at Eylau for eight days—a political demonstration, intended to impress Europe with his victory—he again retired, but to take up a less extended position. Now Warsaw was left to an independent corps, and the main army occupied the Vistula, from Thorn to the sea, with the centre thrown forward to Osterode.

Once again Napoleon bent every energy to improve the *morale* and material efficiency of his army. He had now a total of 60,000 absentees, half sick, half marauders; and 15,000 more were *hors de combat* from wounds. It was of the terrible hardships lately endured that Napoleon wrote to Joseph, who was complaining of discomforts in his kingdom of Naples: “Here we make war with all its vigour but all its horrors. . . . The officers of the staff have not undressed for two months, many not for four months. I myself have not taken off my boots for a fortnight. We are in the midst of snow and mud, without wine, brandy or bread. We have nothing but potatoes to eat; we make long marches and counter-marches—no pleasant experi-



NAPOLEON AT BERLIN AFTER HIS ENTRY WITH HIS ARMY
ON OCTOBER 27, 1806

(From the Picture by Berthoud in the Versailles Gallery)

ence. We have to fight with the bayonet under a tremendous fire of grape, the wounded have then to be carried back 150 miles in open sleighs. It is but a poor joke,” he adds, “to compare the places where we are to the lovely country of Naples, where you have wine, bread, covering for your beds, society and even women.” Yet the iron nerves of the great leader were quite unshaken in spite of all his army endured. “In the midst of these great fatigues everyone has been more or less ill; as for myself, I was never stronger, I have grown stout.”

The sufferings of the army and the inconclusive nature of the campaign of Eylau could not be concealed from the French people, and marked despondency had followed the frantic rejoicings over Austerlitz and Jena. Paris was deserted, the chief personages at the Court were absent at the front. Trade languished with the absence of all gaiety, the industries that ministered to it were at a standstill. Napoleon from the Vistula strove to remedy this distress. He sent positive orders to the Empress, to the Princesses, to

Cambacérès, Lebrun, and all great officials to give constant entertainments; money obtained by the sale of *objets d'art* in the imperial palaces was to be applied in the purchase of native manufactures; funds for the same purpose were to be drawn from the Treasury, even from his private purse. All warlike stores, accoutrements, equipment, clothing, guns, carriages—everything possible of which the field-army stood in need should be made in Paris, despite the distance and the difficulties of transport. To meet this, his ingenious mind devised the formation of a corps of new *équipages militaires*, battalions of the train that should bring their new wagons right up to the front. Thus he obtained quantities of boots and shoes, food and hospital comforts, harness, ammunition, every necessary for the replenishment of his army and the vigorous prosecution of the war.

Negotiations for peace were in progress during March, and a great effort made to come to terms separately with Prussia. Dantzic fell in May, and, releasing 30,000 men who had besieged it, Napoleon's army reached an effective strength of 160,000.



NAPOLÉON
(From a Lithograph after Charlet)

The Russians had also been reinforced, and Beningsen commanded 120,000 men. Napoleon now proposed to drive the Russians back upon the Niemen, and it would have been Beningsen's surest course to await attack, for he had two strong river-lines to defend, while the French advance must be hazardous. The campaign opened in June, and was rapidly decided. Various sharp encounters took place at Deppen, Guttstadt and Heilsberg, but by the 14th the Russians had fallen back towards Königsberg. Napoleon came up with them at Friedland, not far from Eylau, and fought the last battle of the war. The honours of the day fell to Ney, who stormed the town of Friedland; to Mortier, who carried the centre of the Russian position; and to Victor, “Beau Soleil,” as his soldiers called him, and who came into notice that day leading Bernadotte's corps. The victory was bloody and decisive, a new feature having been introduced for the first time—the concentration of a large number of guns to bring their fire upon one vital point.

After Friedland came the Peace of Tilsit, which placed Napoleon on the topmost

pinnacle of his glory. He was now practically supreme Dictator in Europe ; he had overthrown Austria, Italy barely existed, he had trampled Prussia under foot, and crippled Russia. He could impose his policy upon the great sovereigns, who were his vassals and dared not dispute his imperious will. The one sore point was England's stubborn refusal to recognise his royalty. He had set the Czar to make friendly overtures, but they were sternly rejected ; and Napoleon angrily declared, "It shall be war to the knife, then ; war to the death of one of us." This brought on the coalition against England that was substituted for the abortive invasion ; the coalition that led hereafter to the dethronement and imprisonment of the Pope, the conquest of Portugal, and that mistaken invasion of Spain which was to prove so disastrous.

The Emperor, on his return to Paris after Tilsit, was received with an ovation such as was never decreed to the most triumphant Roman. France was beside herself with joy. The enthusiasm rose to universal delirium ; the country was sated

with glory. These victorious achievements flattered her vanity and gave her the first place in Europe. It was but natural that she should pour incense before the man to whom she owed it all; should worship him in his unapproachable grandeur, gladly hugging her gilded chains, whose iron pressure was concealed under such glorious laurels. The acclamations of the people were loud and prolonged; congratulatory addresses poured in on every side. France was willingly beguiled by the enchanter, who loaded her with rich gifts and new prosperity. "Luxury and glory have never failed to turn the heads of the French" was a speech of the Emperor's, and under their glamour he found the best security for his throne.

Within the circle of his own Court and *entourage* the satisfaction was not so keen. Joy was tempered with apprehension. It was anxiously debated among these many dependents on his sovereign pleasure whether their mighty master had come back in a good temper or not. Many things had occurred in Paris during his absence to vex and annoy him. His

family could not keep the peace with one another; the Bonapartes were bitterly hostile to Josephine, and there was incessant intriguing about succession to the imperial crown. The acknowledged heir, Napoleon's favourite, "M. Napoléon," as he called him, the infant son of Louis and Hortense, had been carried off suddenly by croup. On whom should the purple fall? The brothers looked for it; one sister, Caroline Murat, hankered after it for her *beau sabreur*; Josephine wished it for her son Eugène, who was universally beloved. Then there were unsavoury scandals of misconduct; august ladies nearly related to the Emperor were accused of something more than indiscretion. With all this the Faubourg St Germain was credited with much malevolent gossip, ridicule and witty sayings to which Napoleon was particularly sensitive, with real hostility to the present *régime*, that gave uneasiness to its despotic chief and reacted on his temper.

Napoleon soon showed it, for he scolded everybody all round: his wife, his family, the Court, high society, every great official. He was especially angry with Fouché and



LETIZIA MURAT

NAPOLEON LOUIS

Eldest son of Hortense

NAPOLEON III

LOUISE MURAT

ACHILLE MURAT
LUCIEN MURAT

NAPOLEON WITH HIS NEPHEWS AND NIECES ON THE TERRACE OF ST CLOUD
(*After Ducis*)

the imperial police, which neglected its chief business, that of espionage. For deep, dark, rankling suspicion was ever Napoleon's *bête noire*; and a greedy hunger for news and tittle-tattle always marred his greatness. He never felt safe, doubting those even who were most devoted to him. He had been raised by his great deeds immeasurably above all his old comrades, and his imperious spirit, inflated by his unbroken good fortune, continually increased the distance. But from the summit of his throne he looked anxiously down into the depths below, fretting to know all that was said and thought of him, whom he could really trust, what schemes might be hatching out of his sight and reach.

The Imperial Court, thus hanging on the goodwill of the greatest despot the world has seen, was no pleasant resting-place, the imperial service no bed of roses. Yet, if the great Emperor often frowned and scolded furiously, he could reward as lavishly. It was largely for his own glorification, to increase the pomp and pageantry of his court, that he now created

a great order of nobility for his favourites and followers, bestowing new and fantastic titles, accompanied with munificent endowments. His brothers were now Kings ; his brother-in-law a Grand Duke ; Ministers and Marshals became Hereditary Princes or Dukes, thirty-one in number, called after the great battles they had won. The first Duke made was Lefebvre, husband of the now famous "Madame Sans-Gêne," who brought the barrack-room into the Palace, and was a far more worthy woman than many who laughed at her. Now Talleyrand became Prince of Benevente ; Bernadotte, Prince of Monte Corvo ; Berthier, Prince of Neuchâtel ; Lannes was Duke of Montebello ; Ney, of Elchingen ; Davoust, of Auerstadt ; Soult, Duke of Dalmatia, and so on. Lesser generals were created counts and barons in hundreds, by their own or other names, and for a time the confusion in Paris as to addresses was immense, while the residences of the new dignitaries were labelled with their titles in gold letters, and heralds were kept busy in devising coats-of-arms. Enormous incomes were allotted to these various titles from



HORTENSE, QUEEN OF HOLLAND AND STEP-DAUGHTER
OF NAPOLEON BONAPARTE

the French treasury or the revenues of foreign dependencies.

At Court a rigid and elaborate system of etiquette was introduced, copied to a large extent from the ceremonial customs of ancient monarchy, but enforced with a punctilious exactitude far exceeding that of Versailles or Vienna. After the move to Fontainebleau, which shortly became a favourite residence, precise rules were laid down for the general circle: great personages received on certain evenings: on one the Emperor and Empress entertained with music and cards; on another the Grand Duchess of Berg (Madame Murat) gave a ball; next night Princess Borghese (Pauline Bonaparte), Princes and Ministers were to give dinners in turn; the Grand Marshal (Duroc) kept a table at which twenty-five covers were laid daily. The Emperor, as a rule, dined *tête-à-tête* with his Empress; Kings and Princes joined only by express invitation. Following the old practice there were great hunts in the forest of Fontainebleau. Special costumes were designed for the ladies, and each great personage prescribed the colour for her

own suite. The Empress chose a tint of purple called amaranth; Queen Hortense, blue and silver; Madame Murat, pink; Princess Borghese, lilac. The gentlemen, Emperor included, wore green and gold. Yet this splendid Court was by no means lively, and Napoleon complained that although he wanted his guests to amuse themselves they looked bored and dull. The fact was the weight of his despotism lay heavy upon all; it is difficult to be gay to order, even though couched in the imperious "Je le veux" which was so common an expression of Napoleon's irrevocable will. It was impossible, as Talleyrand said, to "amuse the unamusable."

The pomp and splendour of Napoleon's State were seen at their highest when he joined the Czar Alexander at Erfurt to arrange the affairs of Europe and secure a free hand in Spain. It was a theatrical display, more gorgeous than when Henry VIII met Francis upon the Field of the Cloth of Gold. Napoleon posed as the modern Charlemagne; he was King of Italy and Emperor of the West, a God-sent, divinely endowed potentate, with whom



NAPOLEON AND THE QUEEN OF PRUSSIA AT TILSIT, JULY 6, 1807

On the arrival of the Queen of Prussia at Königsberg, the Emperor descended to the street to meet the brave and beautiful sovereign, and received her at the foot of the steps. The Imperial Guard were under arms; the Emperor was accompanied by the Grand Duke of Berg, the Marshals Berthier and Ney, General Duroc, and the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Talleyrand.

(From the Picture by Gosse in the Versailles Gallery.)

there could be no rivalry or equality—only his brother Emperor was suffered to stand near him. At the grand banquets these two alone had arm-chairs; ordinary chairs were set for Kings, and stools, the ancient *tabouret*, were good enough for Princes. Crowned heads waited in ante-chambers, unnoticed and despised; a sentry who was censured for not saluting one excused himself by saying he was “only a king.” At the balls, hunting-parties and festivities Napoleon appeared seldom; but he patronised Wieland and Goethe, whom he summoned to his presence, and treated these immortals to long disquisitions on literature.

Erfurt may be taken as the climax and zenith of the Napoleonic legend. But already the meridian was being passed. He was now committed to the war in Spain. The country he had seemed to subjugate without a blow had now risen against him as one man. He had endured the bitterness of his first terrible reverse, the surrender of an army—Dupont’s—at Baylen, and he meant, at all hazards, at all costs, to re-vindicate his authority. “The

Spanish War will be fatal to the French Empire," said Talleyrand, with far-seeing inspiration. "It is the beginning of the end." Napoleon punished his unpalatable prediction with abuse and disgrace, and Talleyrand was not seen again in Paris till after the retreat from Moscow had shown this fatal end within measurable distance.



CHAPTER IX

THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE—1809-1811



THE seeds of Napoleon's downfall were first sown in the seizure of Spain. This lawless act opened the eyes of the world to his real character, to the nature of the despotism that now ruled France. It has been called a burglary, but it was worse, for the robbery was effected through a door held hospitably open by a friendly neighbour. Talleyrand always condemned it, calling it a base intrigue, an attack upon national aspirations, a blunder that could never be repaired. "That ill-

advised man will call his whole position in question. No victories can efface such deeds," he is reported to have said. "They are too full of treachery, trickery and deceit. I cannot tell what will happen, but you will see that no one will forget them." Spain, taken by surprise, only awoke later to a resistance so embittered that it shook the Napoleonic power; but what it felt was summed up by General Morla in his justification of the shameful breach of the treaty of Baylen. "How can you complain," he asked, "of the ill-treatment of an army that entered Spain on the pretence of friendship, which imprisoned our King and his family, sacked his palaces, robbed and murdered his subjects, ravaged the country, and usurped the throne?"

The ever-present and absorbing desire to humiliate England was no doubt a prime cause of the occupation of Spain. After Tilsit three nations remained outside the confederacy, Denmark, Portugal and Spain, and the Emperor was resolved to turn them also against England. What Denmark might have done we shall never know, for England carried off her fleet and



NAPOLEON

(From a Lithograph by Fauconnier)

held it as a security for good behaviour. Portugal, our ancient ally, made immediate submission, and, as her reward, was filled with French troops and was to be partitioned between her new friend and Spain. Spain was already subservient, and ready to execute Napoleon's fiat; she might even have asked him for a new king to replace the feeble Bourbon dynasty. But Napoleon preferred foul means to any waiting game, and on the plea of invading Portugal, poured a so-called friendly army into Spain, which quietly took possession of the fortresses and soon held the whole country. Murat entered Madrid in March; then the King abdicated, and with his son Ferdinand went to Bayonne, where Napoleon was, and, under pressure, gave up their rights. Meanwhile an insurrection broke out in Madrid, which was dealt with sternly by Murat, and which yet spread and increased till all Spain was aflame.

The Spanish rising did not prevent Napoleon from placing his brother Joseph upon the throne; but it was never suppressed, and when backed by England it became a constantly open sore, eating, like

a gangrene, into the life and strength of the Napoleonic power. Ere long Spain occupied a monster French army drawn from other fields, vast military resources, the best generals. Napoleon himself failed in this disastrous struggle. He learned, too late, that he had rashly embarked on a seemingly interminable war from which there was no glory to be gained; very much the reverse indeed. He presently realised "that he had begun this business ill, conducted it with weakness, and had singularly underestimated its difficulty and importance." It was a huge blunder. Before 1808 he could control Spain as he pleased; now it cost him 300,000 men and weakened his hold of Central Europe. The Spanish insurrection had been imitated in Northern Germany; and the risings under Kalt, Brunswick, Schill, and others sought with intrepid self-sacrifice to retrieve the disgrace of Jena. Prussia was secretly hostile, and Austria was willing to strike a new blow for freedom. It was not a time to lock up half his army in the far end of Europe.

It has been said that England missed a

great opportunity and wasted upon Walcheren an expedition that would have been the backbone of the new resistance had it landed at the mouth of the Elbe. Whether or no, she undoubtedly neglected the point where success was really achieved. The stubborn defence of Portugal was maintained by Wellington almost in spite of the British Government. The inexhaustible patience of a General whose genius for war was still unappreciated, and who rose by sheer strength of purpose, saved the situation. What would have happened had Napoleon come again to Spain? Had he himself controlled the vast forces concentrated against these pestilent English and their contemptible "Sepoy General," would the issue have been different? Conjecture in such a case is vain; yet it may fairly be said that his presence in Spain would have ended the dissensions of his Marshals, would have given that unity of action to operations conducted with true science under the master hand, which were ever wanting in the contest. On the other hand, no doubt, Wellington would have measured his great opponent's strength,

and relying upon his troops and himself, have adapted himself to the altered circumstances. It has been suggested that Napoleon had no great heart for the business ; that once already he had avoided a conflict with British troops, and had turned back from Astorga when Moore's retreating army seemed to offer an easy victory. Many reasons have been given for this sudden *volte-face*. Disquieting news from France ; a suspicious story that had reached him of an alliance between Talleyrand and Fouché, "ces deux agneaux," as he called them, and a plot to put Murat on the throne ; strange new symptoms of restiveness in his senate ; above all, the belief that Austria was arming for another war.

The last-named seems the most probable, as it was the most powerful reason. There was little glory to be gained and some risk in rearguard actions with an unknown general and a handful of troops. Such sorry triumphs would make no appeal to the imagination, and just now he wanted startling victories. His position was by no means secure ; he had lost ground both at home and abroad. France misdoubted

him, and the subject nations groaned under his yoke. He must vindicate his supremacy anew, and by another great and glorious war. The campaign of 1809 followed, with hardly the result he confidently expected; for although he won the battle of Eckmühl at the outset, that of Aspern-Essling was little to his credit, and he is adjudged to have committed grave strategical and tactical errors before and during the fight. He was well matched by the Archduke Charles, who deceived him and drew him on to attack the whole Austrian army when Napoleon believed he had before him no more than 10,000 men. He was in possession of Vienna, certainly, but his passage of the Danube by a single bridge with a powerful enemy near at hand was a hazardous proceeding, which erred against the dictates of military science. His position on the far side of the river between the villages of Aspern and Essling, on which were his flanks, was too cramped for the full utilisation of the large force he had thrown over, and it was jeopardised when the enemy destroyed the bridge which was his only means of retreat.

Again, at Wagram, in that fiercely contested battle extending over two whole days, he had used up all his forces but two last regiments of the Old Guard ; and had not the Archduke Charles been forced back by the menacing advance of Macdonald, or if the Archduke John had come up in time, Napoleon must have been perilously near defeat ; as it was, the Austrians drew off in excellent order without losing a gun or a prisoner. But the Archduke Charles was morally overpowered by Napoleon, and although in a position to continue the war with advantage, he made overtures of peace. There was no immediate need for submission—far from it. But Austria weakly threw up the sponge, and paid for it by extraordinary penalties—the loss of three and a half millions of population, of her access to the sea, and a war indemnity of £3,000,000.

Napoleon had now reached the culminating point in his rocket-like career, and now, if we may accept his own words, by his own act he began to descend. He was superstitious, a fatalist to the last, and he believed always that when he parted with

Josephine he parted with his good luck. Certainly his star began to pale after the divorce. He might, perchance, have escaped the penalties of this cruel perfidy to the woman who, with all her early faults, had been an excellent helpmate, and to whom, indeed, he owed his first command ; but the act itself, all sentiment apart, had serious political consequences. The divorce led directly to the breach with Russia, and the invasion of 1812. It was the first rift in the lute, the first weakening of the Treaty of Tilsit. The breach soon widened, helped by differences over the Continental system and the Czar's obvious inclination to side with England. But the quarrel began with the Austrian marriage, the story of which must now be told.

Years before, at the very beginning of the Empire, the question of heredity had been brought into great prominence by the family dissensions of the Bonapartes, all of whom hated Josephine and were jealous of each other. That Napoleon should have a legitimate heir seemed the best solution of a difficult question ; it ended all contention, and it got rid of Josephine. Joseph urged

divorce strongly, and with seeming disinterestedness, as he was next in the succession. The project of divorce was, no doubt, strengthened in Napoleon's mind by his wife's not unnatural dislike to his barefaced infidelities. For now the *rôles* were changed. It was no longer Josephine who was indiscreet; the Emperor was openly unfaithful. With that unequalled egoism that claimed to be above all rule, he now told Josephine that he was sick of her jealous spying, and meant to free himself by taking another wife, from whom he might hope to have an heir. Now her tears disarmed him: he still wished for the divorce, it was his earnest desire; he begged her to sacrifice herself voluntarily, and thus spare him the pain of obliging her to go, but when she still resisted, pleading firmly for her rights, he gave way. But here his artful mind saw another solution—that of palming off a supposititious child upon France. The Empress had agreed, but an obstacle arose in Corvisart, the great physician, who honourably refused to be a party to the plot. Corvisart told this to Madame de Rémusat after the second



BREAKING THE NEWS

marriage, when doubts were expressed as to the legitimacy of the King of Rome.

Josephine, however, won the day. Not only was she crowned Empress by the Emperor's side, but her union, which had depended hitherto on no more than a civil marriage, was sanctioned by a religious ceremony performed by Cardinal Fesch in the Emperor's cabinet and in the presence of two aides-de-camp. The Cardinal gave her a written certificate, to which she clung tenaciously, despite Napoleon's subsequent efforts to secure it. This religious marriage became later a great stumbling-block, for divorce is not recognised in the Catholic Church, and Napoleon pretended that the ceremony had been a sham ; in other words, as Lanfrey says, he had made a fool of Josephine, Cardinal Fesch and the Pope. The alleged nullity of the marriage was based on the absence of the *cure* of the parish, whose presence alone, it was said, could make it legal.

The project after this slumbered, but it never died. It was kept alive by Josephine's well-grounded jealousy, and the wholesale nature of the Emperor's

indiscretions. There was a long estrangement, during which the poor wife brooded continually, tortured with the constant fear of expulsion, and the Emperor chafed at her prudery, declaring that after her conduct in the past she had lost the right to take him to task. In 1805 there was, however, a reconciliation. Perhaps he was touched by her gentle submissiveness; perhaps the old love flickered up afresh. At anyrate, they became good friends once more. For the moment Josephine's wretchedness abated. She was glad enough to forgive her Napoleon, although hardly sanguine that the troubles would not revive. They did, perpetually. At Munich, after Austerlitz, Napoleon was deeply smitten with the Queen of Bavaria, an elegant and most attractive woman. Although he assured Josephine there was not a woman worth looking at in Warsaw, he met the beautiful Madame Walewska there, the one passion of his life, as he called it, the only woman who seems to have loved him sincerely, although another, Madame Faures, the "Bellilote" of Cairo days, was so devoted that she went to St



THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE
(From the Portrait by Gerard in the Louvre)

Helena and sought to compass his escape. The list of these *liaisons* is long, the subject unsavoury. To Josephine, if she dared reproach him, he replied brutally with the everlasting "Moi." He was above all rules, and meant to do as he pleased.

Still, they remained on fairly good terms, although the uncertainty was always there, and Josephine never felt safe. No doubt Napoleon's vanity and ideas of grandeur were greatly enlarged after Tilsit; he was eager now to enter the confraternity of kings, and wished to gild his *parvenu* title with a marriage with one of the sovereign families of Europe. He would have persuaded Josephine to consent on other grounds. It was his policy, a necessity for France, that he should have children; surely she would help him to make the terrible sacrifice, would take the initiative of separation! This would lessen the odium that might attach to him after this forced rupture. But here Josephine was firm. She would not meet him half-way. She was prepared to obey his orders. He was her master, and if he ordered her to leave the Tuileries she would go forthwith,

but he must issue his mandate. "If you divorce me," said Josephine, "all France shall know that it is you who have sent me away."

This did not suit Napoleon. Josephine was more than popular; she was generally beloved; she had preserved her charm of manner, was ever gracious and kindly. The people, even of France, "ridden with whip and spur," would probably take her side if she were ill-used, and Napoleon was afraid to incense public opinion. He dared put no pressure upon her, and as she still stood firm he tried a more insidious form of attack. He sent for Fouché and primed him to address her as if on his own account. The crafty police-officer assured her of his unalterable devotion, and then pleaded with her in eloquent terms "to immolate herself for France." The Emperor, although at the summit of his glory, was accountable to France, not only for the present but for the future, and what could that future be without a rightful heir to the throne?

Madame de Rémusat, who tells this story (which is, however, vouched for by others), describes Josephine's despair at



THE MARRIAGE OF NAPOLEON AND MARIE LOUISE AT THE LOUVRE, APRIL 2, 1810

(From the Picture by Rouget, in the Versailles Gallery)

receiving this letter, and the judicious manner in which, under M. de Rémusat's advice, she met the crisis. The Empress went straight to the Emperor, letter in hand, and closely watched him while he read it. The great *commediante* at once affected great wrath, declaring that he knew nothing of the matter, and that Fouché should be severely reprimanded. He caressed her with many honeyed words, but could not quite conceal his embarrassment. Later he excused Fouché, as guilty only of an excess of zeal; it was needless to be angry. "It is quite enough to reject his advice, for you know well that I could not live without you."

Another Minister would not adopt Fouché's line: Talleyrand was always consistently opposed to the divorce — considering it was to his and everyone's interest that Josephine should remain at Napoleon's side. "She is gentle and good; she has the knack of keeping him quiet. . . . She is a refuge for us on a thousand occasions. If a Princess were to come here we should find the Emperor break with all his Court, and we should be

nowhere." Napoleon seems to have acknowledged her as his better influence, and in his inmost heart was loath to part with her. The time was long distant when he told Madame de Staël, who taxed him with disliking women, "*J'aime la mienne*," but he acknowledged her power to the last. "In separating myself from my wife, I renounce all the charm which her presence gives to my life." This regret was accentuated when the divorce was actually decided upon. The passage in Taine has been often quoted in which the dramatic story of the parting is told. He tosses about . . . he melts, and embraces Josephine; he is weaker than she. "My poor Josephine, I can never leave you." Again, as the deed of divorce was signed by both parties, "the Emperor was no less moved than she (Josephine), and his tears were genuine," says an eye-witness of the scene.

It is said that the renewal of his intimacy with Madame Walewska, who visited him at Schönbrunn in 1809, finally decided Napoleon to put away Josephine. When he returned to Fontainebleau in the fall of the year he met her with marked coldness,



THE BAPTISM OF THE INFANT KING OF ROME IN THE CHURCH OF NOTRE DAME, JUNE 20, 1811

the private door between their apartments was closed, all intimacy was at an end. But the dread news was not broken to her till their return to Paris, although the coming divorce was already on every tongue. On the night of November 30 the Prefect of the Waiting records how he was called in to assist at a terrible scene. Josephine lay half-fainting on the floor, repeating, "I shall never survive it!" and uttering piercing cries. The Emperor was extremely agitated; his voice was choked, his eyes full of tears. Then he asked the Prefect whether he was strong enough to carry Josephine to her own apartments. But as the answer was in the negative, Napoleon assisted. Josephine now seemed to have fainted outright, but she never lost consciousness, and once whispered to the Prefect that he was holding her too tightly.

After the separation, Napoleon appears to have suffered greatly. He could not bear the solitude; he left the Tuileries for Trianon, where he was still more alone. He refused to see his Ministers, transacted no public business, and presently went to

call on Josephine at the residence she had chosen, Malmaison. A few days later she returned the visit, and they dined together, this semi-detached couple, as though nothing had happened. These curious relations were maintained till the end. Napoleon often communicated with his first wife, and took a deep personal interest in her affairs, paid her debts as of old, for, in the matter of extravagance, Josephine was incorrigible. But she never really held up her head after the divorce, and died in 1814, before the fall of the Empire.

Yet the actual choice of the new wife was not made till the eleventh hour. Napoleon had made overtures to Russia for a sister of the Czar, but they were received very coldly. The disposal of the Russian Princesses in marriage was left by will absolutely in the hands of their mother, and this Empress-mother loathed Napoleon with a deadly hatred. She could not easily be brought to consent, and the negotiations languished. Then, when an arrangement seemed probable, Napoleon sent a peremptory message that unless a definite reply was given before a certain



"LE PETIT CAPORAL." NAPOLEON, MARIE LOUISE AND THE INFANT KING OF ROME
(After Menjaud)

day, he withdrew his proposal. It has been shown that no such reply could possibly reach him within the time, and that this ultimatum was despatched purposely to break the bargain. The fact was, another and more enticing prospect opened up unexpectedly. The proposals, too, came from the other side. An Austrian Archduchess was, in plain English, thrown at his head. The Emperor Joseph, whom he had so sorely buffeted and despoiled, was willing—nay, anxious—to take his old enemy for a son-in-law. The suggestion came from the Austrian Embassy in Paris, at first no more than a suggestion; but it was speedily endorsed from Vienna, where the news of the Russian march had caused the gravest concern. A Franco-Russian alliance strengthened by family ties was full of danger for the crippled Austrian Empire. Conversely, marriage with the Imperial despot promised a long era of peace, during which it might recover from its wounds. The idea was hailed with enthusiasm. “All Vienna is interested,” writes Metternich, the diplomatic go-between in arranging the

match. "It is difficult to realise public feeling about it, and its extreme popularity." Thousands assembled in front of the Hofburg Palace to get a glimpse of the Princess Marie Louise on her way to and from Mass.

Was she really happy, this lamb about to be sacrificed to the Corsican ogre, to the terrible man whom she had been taught from her childhood to loathe?

"What does my father wish?" was the first question of the dutiful daughter. To please him she acquiesced in the sacrifice. It seems as if she soon learned to view it with complacency. The first consolation was the arrival of Napoleon's portrait, a miniature magnificently set in diamonds. "After all, he is not bad-looking," she remarked. The prospect before her lost its chief terror, the devil was not so black as he was painted, and there were many compensations in store for the young Empress of the French. Paris was now the centre of the world, its Court most splendid. A ceaseless round of gaieties awaited her. The convent-bred child of a monarch in reduced circumstances, who



THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE AND THE KING OF ROME

(From the Picture by Franque in the Versailles Gallery)

could give her no jewels, no smart clothes, no amusements but of the dullest and most decorous kind, her life was burdened with a stiff, precise etiquette that prescribed almost conventual seclusion.

The reality must have quickly silenced any remaining scruples. The ardent lover in his rapture, who so loaded her with rich gifts, promised to prove a doting and indulgent husband. He filled her jewel-case, and furnished forth her trousseau in the most lavish fashion. The poor Princess, whose wardrobe had been so meagre, whose personal adornments consisted of paste and a few pearls, was now provided with the finest creations of the best dressmakers in the world. Berthier took with him to Vienna, among other costly offerings, jewels valued at £75,000; one necklace alone was worth half the amount. She learned that she was to have £15,000 a year pin-money. Her French home, wherever she found it, while mounted most gorgeously, was to be truly home; for with the wish to please her lightest whim, everything was there that she had been surrounded with at Vienna.

Whatever the motives that impelled Napoleon to the Austrian marriage, whether desire for an heir or the snobbish vanity of a *parvenu* delighted to mate with a daughter of the Hapsburgs, it is certain that the gratification of his passions played a considerable part. She took his fancy, this high-born maiden, from the moment they first met, and he soon became infatuated with her. She had the beauty of youth, a graceful plump figure, a pink and white complexion, fine chestnut hair and exquisite teeth. He thrust aside all formalities when they brought him his fair bride, and jumped straight into her carriage to woo her with all the peremptory gallantry of a rough soldier seizing his prize. The honeymoon was greatly prolonged. For three months after marriage the Emperor never left his wife; he could hardly be dragged away by even the most urgent business. He followed her everywhere with loving looks. "His young and insignificant wife," as Fouché said, "was the object of his tenderest care."

It is another instance of the crookedness of things that all this devotion was ill-



THE DUKE OF REICHSTADT, SON OF THE EMPEROR NAPOLEON

(From a Portrait by Sir Thomas Lawrence)

requited, and that the woman Napoleon favoured above all women should have played him false. When the evil days came she deserted him, returning first to her allegiance with Austria, and then coming under the domination of Niepperg, the man she really loved. It is needless to follow here the plot to which she succumbed ; it was planned, it is said, by her own father and Metternich, and Napoleon was sacrificed to the lover. Sympathy must surely be with the fallen monarch who hoped to make Elba endurable in the company of his wife and child who never came. After Waterloo, Marie Louise told Wellington he had done her an immense service in removing Napoleon ; nothing in her condition could have saved her from disgrace. As it was, she retired to Parma to rule that duchy, still with Niepperg, who at length married her after Napoleon's death.

But Napoleon had gained one end by his second marriage. On March 20, 1811, Marie Louise gave him a son, to his intense satisfaction, and, as he liked to believe, the joy of France. No doubt the people cheered vociferously, and seemed to welcome the

consolidation of the dynasty, But it was with no firm conviction that the Napoleonic rule was an unmixed boon; doubt and suspicion were already rife, and his despotism was very galling. As a father, Napoleon came out in a new and more estimable light, and his devotion to his child was deep and unchanging. "He loved his son passionately," kept him constantly by his side, and set aside momentous affairs to fondle and play with him. Yet he knew that this heir of his could not bear the burden of his Empire—it was far too weighty; its interests, its extent, too vast and crushing for any but a phenomenon like himself. "Poor child," he said once as he contemplated the little King of Rome, "what an entanglement I shall leave you!" He had, himself, no faith in the continuity or survival of his power. "It will last as long as I do," that much he believed. "But after me my son may deem himself fortunate if he has 40,000 francs (£1600) a year."



CHAPTER X

THE INVASION OF RUSSIA—1811-1812



BLACK shadow of impending war with Russia had darkened the Continent long before 1812. There were many causes at work to weaken and finally dissolve the alliance between Napoleon and the Czar. That the Emperor had unceremoniously jilted a Russian Princess for the marriage with Marie Louise was only one cause of quarrel. There were, also, the wholesale annexations by which the confines of France

were vastly extended ; such as the Valais, part of Hanover, the Duchy of Oldenburg, all the sea-coast as far as the mouth of the Elbe. Again, Napoleon's threat to restore Polish independence kept open a constant sore. But a chief cause of difference was the Continental system. As far back as 1810 Napoleon was at issue with the Czar about the restrictions on English trade. Alexander had followed his ally loyally in declaring war with England, and in closing his ports to her ships and her goods, but he claimed to control the commerce of his country and the apportionment of duties as he pleased. This war of tariffs was becoming a madness with Napoleon. New decrees were issued with bewildering rapidity, imposing heavy percentages on imported goods, prescribing seizures that ruined honest traders, and were maintained by whole armies acting as Customs House officers. These severe penalties in some measure recouped the Treasury for the immense losses due to contraband : smuggling was universal and very profitable. Russia alone in Europe refused to accept Napoleon's laws, to observe his despotic regulations for trade,

and Napoleon at length realised that if the Czar was to be bent to his will, it must be by force of arms. He could not tolerate opposition now when he was, or believed himself, the undisputed master of the world.

Let us consider what his power was at this time, and how it was maintained. Save for the desultory combat in Spain there was peace throughout his empire, such peace as the bully imposes by the sheer weight of his sovereign strength. Europe was almost entirely at his feet; nearly every nation owed him allegiance; his creatures and vassals sat on their thrones. Coercion was the penalty of resisting his authority. The Pope would not declare war with England, being forbidden, as he pleaded, by his faith; forthwith the heir of St Peter was thrust from his holy seat and held a prisoner. Russia was restive, and must accept the arbitrament of the sword. This universal submission had been gained by ruthless severity; it was maintained by a watchful control that paralysed all independence and placed all State resources at the absolute

disposal of France. The colossal fabric of Napoleon's empire could only be sustained by onerous and arbitrary exactions: contributions were levied upon all his allies and subjects, in war material, military contingents, cash. The vast army he presently led into Russia was mixed and polyglot. Austria, Bavaria, Saxony, Würtemberg, Italy, even Spain, swelled its ranks, shared its fortunes, its short-lived triumphs and ultimate collapse.

The wasting and perpetual blood tax was not the whole price that France paid for her greatness. She had surrendered her freedom entirely into the hands of a jealous tyrant, and was hopelessly, abjectly enslaved. And she must suffer in submissive silence. The Press was gagged with an alert censorship that missed nothing; the police, wielded now by the unscrupulous Savary, made wholesale seizures, as when Madame de Staël's work on Germany was suppressed, the sheets burnt, and their outspoken writer expelled from France. She supposed that her crime was to have omitted Napoleon's name from her book, but Savary told her that there



NAPOLEON, FROM A MINIATURE

could be no place in it "worthy of the Emperor," that her work was "not French, and that the air of her native country was not good for her." The handful of newspapers permitted to appear might be profitably worked in the absence of competition, but they were saddled with the endowment of other literature, and had to pay pensions, which such eminent writers as Monge, Chenier and Benardin St Pierre did not blush to accept. The right of private as well as public speech was forbidden. The most elaborate and widely-extended espionage prevailed, worked by a shameless secret police, which reported everything they heard, magnifying mere trifles into overt attacks upon Napoleon and his *régime*. The Emperor was easily outraged; his arm was far-reaching; a chance expression idly uttered in Vienna or Berlin met swift reproof, and nearly certain punishment. How can those who still worship their great idol excuse a system that filled the State prisons with political offenders, condemned for a crooked look or a mere whisper of dissent? These prisons were multiplied, they were estab-

lished both at home and abroad, and were always full ; there were Ham, Saumur, the Château d'If, Landskrona, Pierrechâtel, Fenestrelle, Campiano and Vincennes. Imprisonment depended upon the will of the Emperor alone, and this arbitrary ruler had once posed as the apostle of universal freedom !

Discontent was already rife, although it mostly grumbled and rumbled underground. France chafed bitterly at the restrictions on trade ; she was sorely tried by the Continental system, and by the complete paralysis of her maritime commerce. Except on a few enterprising privateers, the French flag was not seen on the high seas ; her harbours were filled with dismantled shipping, rotting from disuse. Far more bitter was the repining at the conscription which, with ravening and unappeasable appetite, was devouring the youth and manhood of the country. Two facts may be quoted in proof of the terror and hatred inspired by the exigencies of military service. The cost of a substitute was 8000 f., or £320, and there were in 1811 80,000 *conscripts réfractaires*, men on whom the lot had

fallen, but who had absconded or were in hiding to avoid service. At this time a network of police-stations covered the land, and recruits, those new candidates for glory, were marched to their garrisons from point to point, chained and under the escort of the *gendarmes*. To diminish this increasing number of absentees, a scheme was devised for quartering troops in the domiciles of those families whose sons had deserted. This system was soon developed by the formation of movable columns, that terrorised districts, and were known from their exactions as *colonnes infernales*. Such were the means adopted to raise the magnificent army of Russia that was doomed to destruction.

Preparations had long been afoot for this gigantic enterprise, the disastrous consequences of which enveloped the daring spirit that had planned it and contributed largely to his downfall. The army which Napoleon had collected for the invasion of Russia exceeded half a million of men: it was the largest armed force that had taken the field since Xerxes had sent his myriads against Greece. Speaking more precisely,

it consisted of 500,000 infantry, 100,000 cavalry and 1300 guns. But only a third of these numbers were French ; the balance was made up of contingents furnished by all the subject Powers. It was formed in ten army corps, under some of Napoleon's most famous marshals, although Soult, Marmont and Suchet were absent in Spain. The Imperial Guard was in Napoleon's own hand ; Murat, King of Naples, commanded all the cavalry ; Schwartzberg, the Austrians ; Poniatowski, the Poles ; Prince Eugène, the army of Italy. The army was organised with great nicety and completeness. No point was too minute for the attention of the greatest military administrator the world has known. The largest and most momentous questions were dealt with in a prescient and comprehensive spirit. But he could not, or would not, foresee the difficulties inseparable from making war on such a gigantic scale. The most careful elaboration of machinery was powerless to create supplies where they did not exist, and a prime cause of his approaching failure was the want of food. "Qu'on ne me parle pas des vivres" was a favourite

phrase with the commander who first made war support war. He had not yet waged it in a sterile and inhospitable country, where his commissariat, his well-planned Intendance, had nothing to work upon, and he paid the penalty by the untold sufferings of his army in that terrible retreat. Some idea of that Intendance—of the civil departments of the expeditionary army—is given us by De Fezensac, who was one of Berthier's aides-de-camp in the early stages of the campaign. When the Prince of Neuchâtel (Berthier) reviewed it at Wilna, the Intendance looked like an army in battle array, with its hundreds of high officials—*ordonnateurs, inspecteurs aux revues* and *commissaires de guerre*; its hospital services—doctors, surgeons and dispensers; its commissariat officers in every branch; its host of artificers and workmen. “Yet despite the zeal and talents of the Intendant-General,” says the same authority, “this enormous department was useless from the beginning, and actually hurtful at the end of the campaign.” The army was indeed greatly hampered by its overgrown camp-following; it marched with a monstrous tail of baggage wagons, pack

animals, led horses, and servants of all descriptions.

The French army, moving gradually forward to the frontier, overflowed Prussia, and Berlin became a French garrison, commanded by a French general. The destination of the advancing troops was the Niemen, along which they concentrated in the early part of June. Meanwhile Napoleon had summoned his suite of subject sovereigns to attend him at Dresden, and they came, with homage on their lips and hatred in their hearts, to increase the lustre of his court. There were the Emperor of Austria, the Kings of Prussia and Saxony, the royalties of his own family and creation, the Kings of Westphalia and Naples, the Viceroy of Italy and a crowd of minor potentates. The sharp contrast between the pomp and pageantry of this vainglorious display and the Emperor's return to Paris seven months later has often struck the philosophic mind. He crept back then to the Tuileries humbly in a hackney cab, the first of the few poor stricken fugitives who alone remained of his proud hosts, and the perishing remnant whom he had abandoned in their misery.

He had now nearly justified Decrès' prediction to Marmont: "You, of course, are satisfied because you have been made a marshal. You see everything at its best. Shall I tell you the real truth—shall I unveil the future? The Emperor is mad, quite mad. He will ruin us all, many as we are, and everything will end in a frightful catastrophe."

In the early stages of the invasion it seemed all plain sailing, except for the scarcity of supplies, and this, as has been said, did not trouble Napoleon. Yet it was a part of the enemy's plan to lay waste their own country and retire into the depths of Russia. There is little doubt that the moral effect of Wellington's retreat upon Torres Vedras was felt even by the Czar Alexander, and that he readily accepted the advice tendered him by the Swedish General, Armfeldt, to play the same waiting game. It is stated, rather loosely, that this plan was more accidental than deliberately conceived, that the retreat before the advancing French was inevitable, and not a *ruse de guerre*. At the same time the continued retreat was most distasteful to many

Russians ; although its wisdom was acknowledged and approved by the higher strategists, the army and the nation wanted to fight, and were greatly disheartened by these long retrograde movements. But Alexander's intentions were known and revealed the year previous, as early as July 1811, when Almquist, the French Minister at Stockholm, reported them to Napoleon, but in vain. The Emperor would not be warned. He thought to practise the strategy of his earlier wars ; to pour his mammoth legions into Russia with the old lightning-like promptitude ; to dictate terms in Moscow after a short month of dazzling victories, as he had done already in Turin, Milan, Vienna and Berlin.

Now when the die was cast and the opponents stood facing each other, the Czar's forces, although he had long expected war, fell short of his enemy's. He had barely 200,000 men against the 400,000 who crossed the Niemen in the latter end of June 1812. The Russians had three armies in the field. The first, under Barclay de Tolly, 100,000 infantry and 30,000 cavalry, watched the Niemen north of Wilna ; the

second, under Bagration, 50,000 infantry and 12,000 cavalry, was to the south of Bresenc, on the Bug; the third, under Tournaseff, 40,000 infantry and 14,000 cavalry, was still further south in Volhynia.

Napoleon's first movements were rapid. He got six corps across the Niemen, at Kovno and Grodno, on June 24; one other corps crossed at Tilsit to cover the left flank; two more at Bresenc, on the Bug, to operate on the right. He was at Wilna in strength four days later, and had succeeded in striking in between the first and second Russian armies, his object being to separate and keep them apart. At his advance the first fell back to the entrenched camp of Drissa, and then to Polotsk, both on the Dwina. Bagration, with the second army, reached Bobinsk, on the Beresina, pursued, but only slowly, by Jerome Bonaparte.

The French now halted seventeen days at Wilna. Their leader was no longer the vigorous conqueror of Italy, the victor of Austerlitz, Jena, Friedland, Wagram. He has here all the old strategical advantages of a central position from which he might turn superior numbers to overwhelm the enemy's

fractions, but he fails to seize them. He is engaged with Polish delegates, who urge him to reconstitute their kingdom; with balls and *fêtes*; with visionary hopes that negotiations may turn towards peace. Yet the season is drawing on; it is a far cry to Moscow, and he can hardly prevent the concentration of the Russian armies, while his own is already dwindling away; sick, stragglers, and marauders have reduced it now to 300,000 men.

On July 12, Davoust, who had superseded Jerome, continued to press Bagration more actively. Combats ensued, but in the end the Russians were driven behind the Dnieper. Four days later Napoleon moved from Wilna to Glubokoe, meaning to turn Barclay's left; but Barclay was gone, retiring on Vitebsk. Napoleon followed, reaching Vitebsk on July 27, and here he hoped to engage. But again the Russians fell back, now to Smolensko, where the two armies, Barclay's and Bagration's, effected a junction on August 3, and Napoleon's advantage ceased.

There was some fighting now, both on the right and the left, without decisive results; and the main Russian army in the centre

advanced from Smolensko against Napoleon, who hoped, by crossing the Dnieper and taking them in the rear, to bring on a great battle. But again the Russians eluded him, barely in time to save Smolensko, then continued their retreat towards Moscow. It was here at Smolensko, as previously at Vitebsk, that Napoleon showed much doubt and uneasiness. He had effected nothing as yet: there had been no dazzling successes; his army already suffered, and was out of hand; he had left doubtful friends and disaffection in his rear; the season was fast drawing on. He hesitated to advance further, and yet went forward.

The battle for which he pined became possible at last, and was fought at Borodino. Public clamour in Russia had so loudly denounced the policy of retreat that a change was made in commanders. Kutusoff, a general advanced in years, replaced Barclay de Tolly, and his orders were to stand his ground. Kutusoff took up a strong position covering Moscow, where the French attacked him on September 6, and the great battle was fought with immense carnage, yet doubtful results. Napoleon had been

pressed to throw all his weight upon the Russian left, but he hesitated to use up his last reserves for that purpose on the sound plea that he was 2500 miles from home. Had he been the general of early days he would have risked more and achieved more ; as it was, the Russians withdrew to a second position, and then retired on and through Moscow, which Napoleon occupied on September 15.

It was an empty conquest. The ancient capital of All the Russias was a howling wilderness, deserted by its inhabitants, sacrificed by Kutusoff, who preferred to keep his army intact. Now followed the conflagration, the firing of the city, the deliberate project of its Governor, Rostopchin, although the work was completed by incendiaries. Moscow was a ruin still smoking, a grim object-lesson for Napoleon of the unyielding character of his foe. He found the same disposition in the chief of the State, even now with the French in his capital ; the Czar Alexander refused to treat, and Napoleon was called upon to make a momentous decision. He was faced with a terrible problem : if he held his ground, it



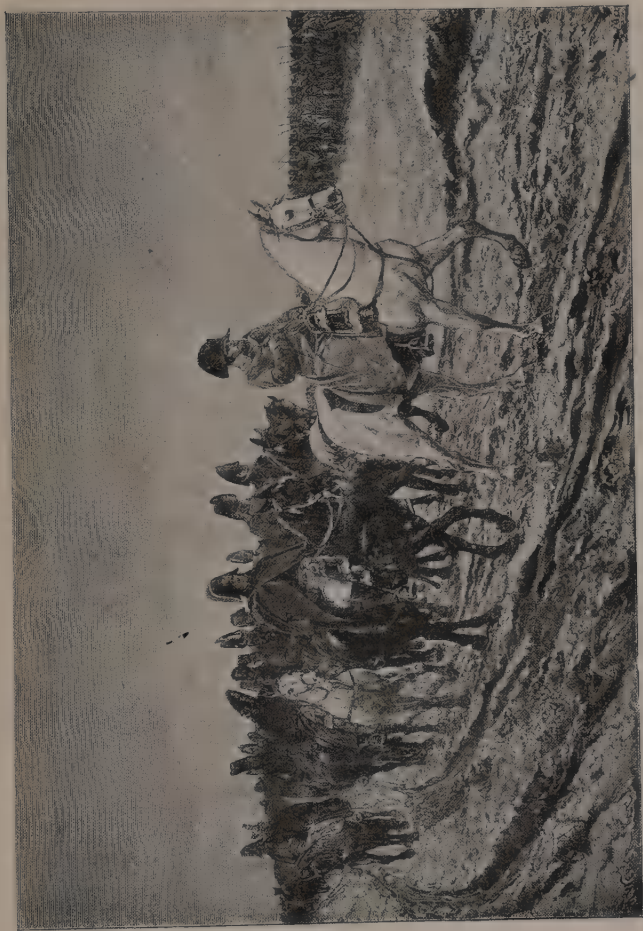
MARSHAL NEY IN THE RETREAT FROM MOSCOW
(From the Picture by Yvon, in the Versailles Gallery)

would be with no hope of supplying his army during the dread winter now near at hand ; if he retreated, he admitted his failure before all the world.

On October 19 he began the famous retreat, more fruitful in human suffering, more destructive of life, than anything of its kind known. The day previous Napoleon held a great review in the Kremlin, where his starving troops, with the finest soldierly spirit, turned out as if on parade in Paris. But their shrunken numbers told the plain story, and eye-witnesses declare that the Emperor's overwhelming anxieties were visible on his face. The direction of Napoleon's march was now southward, to gain the richer and unexhausted country, but the Russians, now greatly reinforced, were waiting for him, and after a struggle at Malo-Jaroslawitz, turned them off that road on to the old line by Smolensko, which they reached on November 9. Already the French had lost all semblance of an army. The march across the vast plains was like that of an Eastern caravan. Miles and miles of vehicles of all descriptions, droskies and common carts among wagons, and the

most elegant carriages, all charged with food, for every man had to fend for himself. It was hoped that rations would be found at Smolensko ; it had been one of the great advance depôts, and the troops would have rushed in to help themselves. Napoleon in person occupied the town with his Imperial Guard, who were well supplied, but the collapse of the Intendance prevented any regular issue to the rest, and there was great confusion, which was ended in a general pillage, when the food for months was wasted in a few hours.

After Smolensko, the French army, with the exception of the Imperial Guard, was completely disorganised, but Napoleon, after fighting an action at Krasnoi to clear his road, retired on Orcha, leaving Ney with the 3rd corps as a rearguard. The intrepid and skilful general brought in his force to Orcha on November 20, sadly diminished after many fierce combats and in passage of the Dnieper across ice. By this time the grand army was reduced from 250,000 to 10,000 men, and had Kutusoff been smarter at Krasnoi, he would probably have surrounded the Imperial Guard and made



"1812"

(Meissonier)

Napoleon prisoner. But now, on November 23, two French corps that had held the Dwina joined, and raised the whole force to numbers variously stated at from 18,000 to 20,000 men.

Napoleon now made for the Beresina River, which he crossed in the presence of the enemy. It was a masterly operation, but entailed a frightful loss of life, largely from the severity of the weather. Throwing three bridges across above Borisow, he passed three corps to the right bank, under cover of a fourth on the left. Those across fought a defensive action while the whole were gradually withdrawn, and the retreat was continued on Wilna, which was reached on December 9. But Napoleon had himself left the shattered remnant of his forces at Smorgoni on the 6th, and hurried off to Paris post-haste. He must make head now against this stupendous disaster, which clearly imperilled his throne. It was not the only misfortune in this terrible year. The news of Wellington's victory at Salamanca reached him on the night of Borodino, with the reoccupation of Madrid. Now, too, his lukewarm allies quickly

abandoned him. The Prussian army went over to the Russians, *en masse*; the Austrian corps under Schwartzenberg made a separate peace with the Russians, and retired to Austrian territory. These, with Macdonald's corps, had not been engaged, and so had escaped the general catastrophe, but the total losses of Napoleon's army have been estimated at half a million of men.



CHAPTER XI

NAPOLÉON AT BAY—1812-1813



AFTER his terrible overthrow in Russia there was something noble and pathetic in the firm attitude displayed by Napoleon. It has been said that a good man struggling with adversity is a sight for the gods. Napoleon was not a good man—far from it; he was a monster and a scourge. Yet his desperate and tenacious efforts to retrieve disaster command admiration and respect. The waters might be closing over him, but he would still fight hard for life. We almost

forget that the mainsprings of this prolonged resistance were pride and vain-glory; rather than accept peace without new victories he would continue the war at all hazards and at all costs. He held life too cheaply to hesitate; he was ready to make any sacrifices to re-establish his power. Hecatombs had been slain to create it, more would be poured out to maintain it. Now the very last man should be spent to save him. "I grew up in the field," he told Metternich, "and a man like me troubles himself little about the lives of a million of men." France was nearly exhausted already, but he was resolved to drain her to the last drop. His first act on his return to Paris in December 1812 was to organise a fresh army out of the sparse materials to hand.

Never in the whole course of his active and eventful career did Napoleon show to greater advantage than now, when on the brink of despair. His labours during that winter were almost superhuman, and were concentrated upon the organisation of his new levies. They numbered 350,000, and included men left on previous conscriptions, the first line of the National Guard.



NAPOLEON
(From the Engraving by C. H. Hodges)

Several fine regiments of marine artillery were incorporated with the infantry of the line, and large bodies of seasoned veterans of the Young Guard were withdrawn from the contest in Spain. France, in spite of her bereavement, was eager to wipe out the memory of recent defeats, and moved by real patriotism rather than flattery or fear, willingly seconded Napoleon. The great cities voluntarily supplied contingents of men and horses. Ten thousand youths equipped themselves at their own charges to form a reserve of cavalry. All these forces were manipulated with the skill and energy of the great master-hand. Four great corps of observation were formed upon the Rhine, in Illyria and on the Elbe, to which the various units were directed as they were raised, there to be organised, drilled and trained. Good officers were luckily not wanting; 3000 officers and *sous officiers* were transferred from the *gendarmerie* to the line; a good proportion of experienced officers had escaped from the horrors of the Russian retreats; many of the best leaders were still in command, although the necessity for extensive pro-

motions to fill gaps had advanced a number of subordinate Generals little accustomed to handling large bodies of men. The great dearth was in horses; so many had been used, and the supply was limited. For the same reason, Napoleon's new cavalry was of a low standard. It is an arm that cannot be improvised; the training of both men and horses takes time.

The result of these extraordinary efforts was the appearance of a new army as if by magic in the spring. It numbered 140,000 men, and was posted towards the end of April 1813 from the Rhine towards the Saale. Prince Eugène, with the remains of the grand army, some 40,000 men, was more advanced, and held the Elbe, between Magdeburg, Dessau and Torgau. Napoleon's point, his "principal objective," was Dresden, where his two chief enemies, the allied monarchs of Prussia and Russia, held their headquarters, but in a country that was supposed to be friendly to the French. Their positions were very scattered, their numbers inferior, for neither of the Allies had the means nor the ability of their great adversary.

Russia was gathering up slowly the reinforcements needed to replace the inroads of 1812. Prussia had splendid reserves under the system introduced after Jena, when she had been forbidden to keep a large army on a war footing, but all these were not brought into line. At this time their forces in the field numbered 133,000 with 30,000 good cavalry included. About half of these were Russians under Wittgenstein, who watched the Elbe about Dresden; Blücher, with 25,000 Prussians, was in Silesia; the rest were near Magdeburg or in Berlin.

As the spring advanced, the Allies entered Dresden, and, for the moment, gained the Saxons to the coalition; then, having concentrated, they advanced beyond Leipsic, meaning to take the offensive against the French line of communications. Wittgenstein was quite unconscious that he had a new and numerous French army in his front, and was caught on the move. Napoleon, who was at Erfurt on April 28, was marching forward in strength on May 2, and fell in with Wittgenstein's advance guard at Lützen. The French

were scattered along the line of march, for their inefficient cavalry had given no warning of the enemy's approach. Ney, with the 3rd corps, was at first severely handled, but was soon strengthened, and the fight became general. At 6 p.m. Napoleon had lost ground, but just before nightfall he had recovered the key of the position with the Young Guard. The victory remained with him, although it was indecisive from the want of cavalry to pursue, but it raised the spirits of the young conscripts and revived confidence after the late reverses in Russia.

Now the Allies fell back towards the Elbe, and Napoleon entered Dresden, where the King of Saxony, deserting the coalition, joined him. Meanwhile, Ney had reached Torgau, lower down the Elbe, and being ordered to rejoin Napoleon, had moved by the farther or eastern bank, where he was attacked *en route*. This brought on the battle of Bautzen, in which the Allies occupied a strong position behind the river Spree. Napoleon, who was in greatly superior numbers, made a great flanking movement with sixty thousand men under

Ney, while the rest attacked the front. Ney's march was successful, and obliged the enemy to retire, but they did so in unbroken formation ; for the French cavalry were checked by the Russian, and could make no impression. The fighting lasted through two days, May 20 and 21, and at the end the Allies withdrew worsted to the Oder. An armistice was now signed and hostilities were suspended.

It is generally believed that Napoleon might now have rehabilitated himself completely. The recent successes of Lützen and Bautzen had in a measure retrieved his position and raised him from the Slough of Despond. There was no strong bond of union between his enemies. Russians and Prussians were bickering, blaming each other for the late defeats. Austria was still wavering, having no prepossessions for the coalition, yet not definitely disposed to support Napoleon. She needed humouring, asked for concessions that Napoleon might have granted but still would not, declaring that it would discredit him at home. Peace seemed abhorrent to him on these terms. Much as it was longed for by his troops,

and especially by many of his marshals, who were sick to death of war, he would make no peace until he had driven his enemies from the field. Nothing less, he argued, would re-establish him permanently in France. He was a gambler playing his last stakes, and reckoning still upon his superior knowledge of the game. Might not his generals yet save him by one or two masterly strokes, backed by good fortune, as of old? Yet a less superstitious man might have begun to think even now that his luck had turned, that he had better compound with it and not affront it further. Recent events showed that it had not deserted him entirely, but the very nearness of the better fortune that still proved elusive might be taken as a sign that his star was declining.

So he made no effort to win Austria, but offered her only preposterous and impossible terms. In the end she joined the coalition, bringing it a very notable accession of strength—an army of 130,000 men, as yet fresh and untouched in recent campaigns. In the new campaign now imminent the Allies were the strongest; they had half a



"SIRE, YOU MAY DEPEND ON US."

(From a Lithograph by Raffet)

million of men in the field, and the French not much more than half that number. But Napoleon held his force compactly together in a central position, while the Allies had three separate armies in the field, and were not, like the French, controlled by a single imperious master-mind. There was the army of Bohemia, 240,000, under Schwartzberg; that of Silesia, under Blücher, 95,000; and, lastly, Bernadotte, now King of Sweden, was at Berlin with 90,000 more. Besides these, two smaller corps were opposite Hamburg and Dantzic; others watched the Bavarians and Italy; while the Russian reserve, 50,000 men, under Benningsen, was at Kalisch, and came up later in support. Nor did these numbers exhaust the allied resources, for there were reserves untouched in the second and third lines.

Napoleon, who held the strong places of the Elbe, confronted his foes with three main bodies. Oudinot, with three corps, watched Berlin from in front of Torgau; Macdonald, with four, was in Silesia, opposing Blücher; he himself, in the centre, watched Bohemia with four corps and the guard. One corps of cavalry was at Leipsic,

the other three with the Silesian forces. His plan had been to send Oudinot against Berlin, while he held Blücher in check on the side of Silesia, and Schwartzenberg on that of Bohemia, a new danger following Austria's defection. The first movement was well begun and promised great things indeed, for the capture of Berlin would have been a serious blow to the coalition. But now Napoleon, who was with Macdonald in Silesia, heard that Schwartzenberg had advanced, and, crossing the frontier range of Bohemia, was aiming at Dresden, the central point of Napoleon's system of defence. He left Macdonald, therefore, to "contain" Blücher, to prevent him from moving to right or left against Oudinot, or to reinforce Schwartzenberg, and retraced his steps, hoping to fight a decisive action. He thought Dresden, which had been fortified, could hold out some days, and he meant to fall upon Schwartzenberg's rear. Then Gouvion St Cyr sent to say he could not defend Dresden with a garrison of children; and Napoleon hurried thither with two cavalry and three infantry corps, leaving Vandamme at the mouth of the



NAPOLEON
(*After Charlet*)

Bohemian mountain-passes, where he was to fall upon the enemy retreating—after defeat—for Napoleon confidently counted on a great victory.

Schwartzenberg had reached Dresden on August 25, but hesitated to attack at once, as all his corps had not come up. Napoleon arrived next morning at 9 a.m., and, as usual, his mere presence changed the situation. His sagacity in perceiving the right course, his promptitude in carrying it out, brought him now at the critical moment to the decisive point. On the other hand, the Allies were fixed and hampered by divided counsels, for their camp was crowded with Emperors, Kings and Ministers, all of whom argued and interfered with action; and the attack, ordered for that day, August 26, was countermanded when news came of Napoleon's presence in Dresden, and yet was made in a desultory fashion that ended in a costly repulse. Next day, August 27, Napoleon took the initiative, and attacked both flanks of the allied position, which was on the heights south of the Elbe but faultily occupied. Their mass was about the centre,

their left at some distance, much isolated and with a gap in the line. Murat was charged with this attack, and while his infantry assailed the front, his cavalry, penetrating by the gap, overflowed the rear. The Austrians soon broke and fled. Then Napoleon sent his left forward under Ney against the Russians, who fought stubbornly, but were presently driven from the field. In the centre the battle was no more than an artillery duel. Torrents of rain fell during the action, which broke up the roads and greatly impeded the retreat of the beaten army. It had been Napoleon's aim to cut it off from the road to Freyburg on one side and Pirna on the other, thus forcing it into the difficult country where Vandamme was in waiting to destroy it.

The army of Bohemia was now in full retreat, and in the direction Napoleon wished, his columns in hot pursuit. On the morning after the battle, August 28, he had established the Imperial Headquarters at Pirna, whence he could direct in person the decisive operations that must soon deliver the enemy into his hands. He must almost infallibly have captured the

two Emperors—of Austria and Russia—and the King of Prussia, and the triumph must have gone far to re-establish his prestige. And yet now he lost it all—the last and perhaps the greatest, at least the most momentous chance of his life. Suddenly he relinquished the personal command and went back to Dresden. Various reasons have been offered for this abandonment of a pursuit that promised him so much. One is that he had received bad accounts from Silesia, where, in truth, Macdonald had been grievously handled by Blücher on August 26; another that he thought he might organise an attack which would secure him Berlin, for the news of Oudinot's reverse at Grosbeeren had not yet arrived. The third—the most probable, and that generally accepted now—is that he was seized with a strange mysterious illness, the first symptoms of the malady that killed him. De Fezensac says that he had breakfasted as usual on August 28, and was reviewing the troops as they passed on in pursuit, when he was seized with violent internal pains. It was thought at first that he had been poisoned. Whatever the cause, his mental and physical

prostration was such that he was unfit for duty, and now, at the critical moment, became suddenly an altered man. The breakdown was, after all, intelligible. On the day he reached Dresden he had been drenched to the skin, yet he made all his dispositions for the fight without changing his clothes, and again during the battle was exposed to the fury of the elements. It may be well believed, too, that the mental strain of anxieties, weighty enough to crush a dozen, was beginning to tell upon this extraordinary man, and that nerve exhaustion helped to develop disease.

Undoubtedly now the luck had turned. Here its last great prize had slipped away from causes that defied prevision. From now henceforward Napoleon encountered almost unbroken misfortune. His great military genius flickered up once again for the defence of France in 1814, and with so bright a flame, that this campaign is held up as one of the finest illustrations of war, but for the rest of this year, 1813, he experienced nothing but defeat. Blow followed blow, each with more destructive effect, limiting his power of resistance. The battles

on the Katzbach, and at Grosbeeren, had actually preceded the victory at Dresden. Immediately afterwards came Vandammé's overthrow by the army he was supposed to intercept, for the pursuit had relaxed after Napoleon left, and the Allies continued their retreat more leisurely and in good order. On the 29th Vandamme attacked the Russian Guards at Töplitz and was driven back; next day they attacked him in position at Culm, and, being in great strength, all but destroyed him. Nor was this all. After Oudinot's defeat by Bernadotte, Napoleon had given Ney command of the Army of the North, and desired to again threaten Berlin, but he was met by Bernadotte at Dennewitz on September 6, and completely defeated. The causes of these repeated disasters were not far to seek. They have been largely, and, no doubt, rightly attributed to the care with which collision with Napoleon in person was avoided, and attacks made on his marshals when without his guidance. If the Emperor was in the field, the enemy retired before him. When he moved to another sphere of operations, or when a

marshal was detached alone, issue was joined, with the result we have seen. Thus Napoleon, in spite of his personal activity, failed in bringing on the great battles and decisive victories he sought and expected. This was the counsel given by Moreau, now in the Russian service, and by Jomini, the great writer on war. It was followed when Blücher in Silesia, having driven the French across the Bober, retired on the approach of Napoleon. When Napoleon started for Dresden, Blücher again advanced, and won the battle of the Katzbach. Napoleon returned, Blücher withdrew; and again, a third time, the Prussian general did the same. Schwartzenberg advanced on Dresden, thinking Napoleon occupied in Silesia. The loss of that battle convinced the Allies that their system of retreat was wise. Three times Schwartzenberg fell back at the approach of the Emperor. Vandamme, Oudinot, Ney—all were defeated in the absence of Napoleon.

Yet this explanation is not altogether sufficient, for the French marshals were surely not inferior to the generals who thus beat them. They were as good men, yes—

as expert leaders in the field ; but they had no heart in the business : they would not work together, their jealousies and constant quarrels did infinite injury to the common cause. Napoleon complained often of their lack of confidence in themselves and in their troops. All wanted him with them to enforce their orders and infuse energy in all ranks. Ney found command most irksome, and after Dennewitz said he would rather be a simple grenadier. The *morale* of his generals, of all his officers, was gone. His colleagues subordinate to him would not obey his orders. "I am tired of repeating that it is impossible to make General Reynier do what he is told. I beg that either he or I may be removed," Ney wrote on September 23. Macdonald, after the Katzbach, complained that he tried his hardest, but was neither seconded nor imitated. No concerted action could be carried out, no combinations made under such conditions ; operations failed, movements were retarded, because orders were misunderstood or openly defied. We have thus in Germany the same fatal consequences from these dissensions as in Spain.

But there was yet another cause, and that was the inferior quality of the fighting machine. At Wagram, as far back as 1809, Napoleon said he no longer commanded the soldiers of Austerlitz. The army of 1813 was far worse than that of 1809. The places of the veterans who had fallen wholesale in Russia were now largely filled with mere striplings—brave lads, no doubt, who were capable of fine feats; but their enthusiasm was short-lived, and they were physically unequal to the hardships of a prolonged campaign. With constitutions still unformed, and wanting in the patient hardihood of old soldiers, they broke down under the combined effects of hunger, fatigue and persistently inclement weather; they were easily discouraged, and fought badly against older and more seasoned troops, while the want of subsistence brought on marauding and so much misconduct that the French army was rapidly becoming disorganised before the end came at Leipsic.

It is recorded of Napoleon that, as the waters closed over him, he displayed unwonted patience; an unwearied dignity and

constancy that deserved the highest respect. He never reproached his defeated marshals, but took their failures as part of the bad luck that haunted him, and forgave them even their faults. When they quarrelled, he interposed with almost paternal kindness, and reconciled them without wounding their feelings. "He calmed the irritation of one, revived the courage of another, reminded a third that a soldier must obey orders, a fourth that he must treat his subordinates well." Ney and Macdonald retained their commands; Oudinot was put at the head of the Young Guard. It was a time to close the ranks around him, to keep his adherents together, to lose the help of none. The French army was already reduced to half its numbers. The allied forces were gaining ground on every side. Bernadotte, with his Army of the North, was across the Elbe; so was that of Silesia; that of Schwartzenberg was moving on Freyburg, to strike at the communications. It was a combined effort to enclose Napoleon in Dresden, for now Benningsen had come up with the Russian reserves, 50,000 fresh men, and the Allies dared at last to try

conclusions with their redoubtable foe. The Bavarians were also at the point of joining them.

Napoleon was now concentrating on Leipsic, and he arrived there on October 15, having seven *corps d'armée*, the Guard, and two cavalry corps in Leipsic, with two more infantry corps and one of cavalry outside, at Mockern—in all, 160,000 men with 720 guns. Schwartzenberg's Bohemian army and Blücher's combined, with a portion of Bernadotte's, numbered nearly 200,000, with 970 guns. The French were on both sides of the river Elster, but the main force to the south, opposed to the allied centre, while to the westward at Mockern Ney made head against Blücher. The result of the first day's fighting on October 16 was a drawn battle. Napoleon had taken the offensive with some success; but Ney had lost Mockern, and during the night the French line was drawn in and now occupied a semicircle around Leipsic, with one flank on the Elster, the other on the Partha, a smaller stream. The 17th of October passed in taking up the new positions and bringing up reinforcements, but on the

18th Schwartzenberg directed all his efforts to crush the French centre to the south of Leipsic, but failing there, attacked the left also without success. Meanwhile Bernadotte and Blücher had joined forces, and by a vigorous advance so compromised Napoleon's left that the position at Leipsic was untenable. During the night he ordered a retreat, and fell back in much confusion towards the Rhine, covered by a gallant rearguard which fought well but was eventually overwhelmed.

No doubt this defeat was accentuated by the lack of due preparation for retreat. There was but one bridge across the Elster, although several of Napoleon's leading lieutenants had urged upon Berthier, the chief of the staff, the vital importance of providing other passages across the river. Berthier would not take upon himself either to order the bridges to be constructed or to point out to his imperial master that they were necessary. He was a man of strict routine, extremely accurate in carrying out his instructions, but he so dreaded Napoleon's fierce outbreaks of temper that he had long vowed to himself

that he would never take the initiative, never even ask questions, or seek instructions. So when the Emperor overlooked any matter, as now, it was neglected altogether. Hence, as Marbot tells us, when the retreat began "on Weissenfels and the Saale there was not a beam or a plank across a single brook." This carelessness for their safety produced much ill-will in the army, and we learn on the same authority that when the Emperor galloped by the retreating columns, he was not greeted by a single cheer.

Leipsic was no better than a massacre. The French in all lost 60,000 men, including prisoners; the Allies, 45,000. Napoleon had some 80,000 only remaining of the army he had led forward in the spring, and with these shattered forces he reached the Rhine on November 2, to begin for the first time in his military career a defensive war. France was to be now invaded as the last outrage imposed by the Napoleonic *régime*.



CHAPTER XII

THE DOWNFALL—1813-1821



USING to reduce the fortresses on the Oder and Vistula, the victorious Allies followed Napoleon slowly to the Rhine. The delay gave their still indomitable foe time to organise the defence of France, but with sadly-diminished means. But, narrowing his line, Napoleon hoped to hold the district between the Seine and the Marne. The aim of the Allies was, of course, Paris; and they eventually approached it with three armies from three

different directions. At first two only moved forward: Schwartzenberg with the Austrians by the line of the Seine from Langres to Troyes; and Blücher from Nancy to St Dizier and down the Marne. This gave Napoleon the strategical advantage—a central position whence by masking and retarding one he could attack the other with an equal or preponderating force. Blücher was his first aim; but after an indecisive action at Brienne, the French were badly beaten at La Rothière. Blücher subsequently divided his forces and was again vigorously attacked, in detail, by Napoleon, who won four brilliant victories in as many days—Champaubert, Montmirail, Château Thierry and Vauchamps. The great captain's strategy in these operations is esteemed the finest in war; he took full advantage of his "interior lines," his central position. Although his total numbers were less than half his enemy's, he was yet invariably superior at the point of attack, and while fully informed of the movements of his opponents, he carefully screened his own. Next, Schwartzenberg, who had got close to Paris, was overwhelmed by a rapid

concentration of Napoleon's forces, and fell back to Troyes.

There was now some talk of peace, but it came to nothing ; and Bernadotte, who had moved through Holland, appeared on the scene in support of Blücher. Marmont fell back as Blücher advanced, but was soon joined by Napoleon, who was in a position to strike a crushing blow at the Prussian rear. Soissons was on the line of Blücher's retreat, and having been fortified and well garrisoned, Napoleon trusted to it to intercept the Prussians and hand them over to him. Soissons was, however, weakly surrendered at the moment it would have been of inestimable use, for had it held out even a day longer Blücher must have been nearly destroyed. As it was, he escaped, being only brought to bay at Craonne, where Napoleon defeated his left wing ; in a second battle at Laon Blücher worsted Marmont, and Napoleon, hearing that the enemy were concentrating, again retreated, but only to renew the offensive against Rheims. So it went on. He was ubiquitous. "We expect this terrible man everywhere," said one of his principal foes. "He has beaten

us all, one after the other. We dread the audacity of his enterprises, the rapidity of his movements, his able combinations. A new plan of action is no sooner conceived than he destroys it."

At last the only safe and sound course was adopted—that of a combined and concentrated march on Paris. Schwartzenberg moved round to join hands with Blücher; they had only Marmont and Mortier before them; Napoleon was still at St Dizier aiming at Schwartzenberg's communications; and at St Dizier he heard the worst news. His marshals had been defeated, the Allies were in Paris, Talleyrand and his party had made submission, while the Empress with her son and the Council of Regency had withdrawn to Blois. Napoleon marched to Fontainebleau, and, after reviewing his troops, proposed to move on Paris and try the issue in one last encounter. But now his lieutenants rebelled; they saw the contest was hopeless and refused to move. They went further, and, waxing insubordinate, forced their imperious master to throw up the sponge. Napoleon, under their menacing pressure, agreed to abdicate



NAPOLEON AT FONTAINEBLEAU

in favour of his son, with Marie Louise as Regent. The formal instrument was taken to Paris by Ney, Macdonald and Mortier; but Talleyrand was for the Bourbons, and the Czar, finding the marshals were not at one, insisted upon unconditional abdication.

Napoleon's once world-wide sovereignty was now restricted to the empire of Elba, and no sooner was the deed signed than he was deserted by all. His staff left him almost in a body; so few remained, indeed, that the duty about his person could not be performed. The soldiery, the rank and file, were still true to the fallen leader they adored, but elsewhere in France, especially in the South, he was hooted with every mark of hatred and contempt. At Avignon his carriage was attacked by a mob, who wished to draw him out and throw him into the Rhone. At Fréjus, where he would have lingered in the last vain hope that a blow might yet be struck for him by the broken bands of soldiery that were re-entering France, he met with the same hostile demonstrations from the populace. The mob was so outrageous that Captain Ussher, of H.M.S. *Undaunted*, who was to

convey him to Elba, remarked upon it. "Yes," replied Napoleon, stoically, "they are a fickle people and like a weather-cock."

Napoleon's exit from France was dignified, although he seemed to feel his humiliation acutely. Captain Ussher waited on him at the small inn of Fréjus, where he was to embark, and found him in the uniform of the Old Guard, wearing the Star of the Legion of Honour. He had an open book upon Elba in his hand, to which he referred when asking questions about the island. His manner was very condescending and polite. Captain Ussher, who was anxious to treat fallen greatness with proper chivalrous respect, no doubt impressed him favourably, for the Emperor always kept a kindly recollection of the English naval officer. When the time came for embarkation, a number of respectable people assembled to bid him farewell, and on the beach a regiment of cavalry was drawn up, which saluted him with the honours of war.

During his short stay at Elba, Napoleon showed much of his constitutional vigour. He set himself to govern his new empire



“1814”

(By Meissonier)

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diligently. Almost directly he arrived he inspected the fortifications and magazine ; he designed a new national flag ; he was deep in a project for conveying water from the mountains to the city and capital, Porto Ferrajo. He made long excursions on horseback, visiting the country houses in the neighbourhood or the mountain villages, following the goat-paths ; or he went out in his barge to examine the coast or the storehouses in the harbour. In the evenings he entered into long discussions upon his campaigns, his policy, his various actions in the late great events, talking with much animation till midnight, and remaining on his legs for three hours at a time.

A very short absence created a very wide-spread revulsion of feeling in favour of the dethroned but still alert adventurer. France soon saw that the return of the Bourbons was no unmixed boon. These half-forgotten princes brought but mediocre talents to the government of a distracted country, and their policy naturally tended to confusion and estrangement. They represented the past, the long-exiled party which now expected indemnification for

their crosses and sufferings. The whole fabric of society was unsettled. New interests consolidated under the empire were threatened; the new men must give place to the followers of the old, in the Army, in the State, in the possession of landed property. France began to think with regretful sympathy of the Napoleonic *régime* and to believe that there were worse evils than a judicious despotism. She was ready, too, to raise her head anew in a not vain hope of improving her position when by the treaty of peace a complete army was restored to her. The garrisons left by Napoleon in German and Prussian fortresses, the prisoners of war, captured in the last disastrous campaign, suddenly returned to France in one vast body numbering 300,000 seasoned soldiers: a fresh struggle might surely be begun with a strong chance of success. But only one man could lead them.

Elba was not so closely supervised that news did not reach the imprisoned Emperor; nor was it so strictly guarded that he could be held a prisoner if he was determined to go free. Sir Neil Campbell,

the British Resident, Napoleon's "guest rather than his guardian," wrote from Leghorn, which he had visited, that he believed a plot for the Emperor's escape was afoot at the end of February. On the very day on which Campbell indicted this warning, February 26, 1815, Napoleon left Elba. He embarked suddenly on board the brig *Inconstant*, which had been prepared secretly as the result of long intriguing with friends in Italy and France. Four hundred adherents accompanied him, and seven hundred more embarked in other smaller vessels. The voyage was tedious, impeded by persistent calms, but on March 1 the flotilla reached Golfe Joanne, near Cannes. The garrison of Antibes, close by, was not immediately won over; but Napoleon escaped detention, and passed on till he reached Grenoble. Here, too, the troops were at first disposed to intercept him; but he bared his breast to their muskets, and boldly asked them if they dared fire upon their Emperor. After that the tide turned, and he was received with frantic delight all along his route. His progress was like that of a victorious monarch

returning to receive the welcome of his faithful people.

In truth, the French are a fickle people. This return of the ruler whom a short year ago they had hated was hailed with delirious enthusiasm. Crowds thronged the road to see him pass; they were so dense that, despite their acclamations, he thought it prudent to change into an unpretending cabriolet. The troops sent to check his progress went over to him at once with shouts of "Vive l'Empereur!" The impetuous Ney, who had so far forgotten himself as to promise allegiance to the Bourbons, had started to "bring back Napoleon dead or alive," but at once changed sides again. The scene in Paris, which Napoleon reached on the evening of March 21, was most exciting. Outside the Tuileries he was received with deafening cheers; inside, the staircases and galleries were filled with old adherents eager to renew their vows of attachment to his person. The Emperor could not get through till an attendant preceded him to clear the way. "As for him (Napoleon), he walked up slowly with his eyes half



RECEPTION BY THE SOLDIERS
(After Stanton)

closed, his hands extended before him, like a blind man, expressing his joy only by a smile." He took possession of the Tuileries with the air of a master, and while he bathed and dressed to hold an evening reception, the ladies and courtiers tore down the Bourbon emblems, exposing the old Napoleonic bees instead of the new *fleurs de lis*.

Napoleon had recovered his kingdom, but he had yet to hold it. He was far from sure of his position at home. France had welcomed him, no doubt, effusively, but the nation was not quite prepared to accept the old despotism, and her public leaders would have nothing but a Constitutional King. New triumphs might, perhaps, give Napoleon his old power, but he must first win them, and that soon, against another powerful coalition. He would have all Europe again upon his track, of that there could be no doubt. The Congress, still sitting at Vienna, lost no time in declaring that Napoleon should have "neither peace nor truce"; he was an enemy and disturber of the peace of the whole world, and he must be finally and completely put down. All the nations

bound themselves by solemn compact to prosecute the war to the bitter end.

After his return from Elba Napoleon had little time to make head against the vast forces that would soon be brought against him. He worked now for the coming campaign of Waterloo as he alone could work. He had to find money, equipment, arms; to reorganise his regiments, form his staff, appoint leaders; he had men in plenty, thanks to the releases from Germany, but that was all. He bent all his energies to this colossal task, and for a time they did not disappoint him. Yet it was soon evident to those about him that he was not the man of old. His powers were beginning to fail him. His head was as clear as ever, but his strength of will, his ability to concentrate himself on his work continuously and unceasingly, were impaired. "I did not know him again," said Carnot. "He talks instead of acting—he, the man of rapid decisions; he asks opinions—he, the imperious dictator who seemed insulted by advice; his mind wanders, though he used to have the power of attending to everything when and as he

would ; he is sleepy, and he used to be able to sleep and wake at pleasure." The man, in short, was mortal ; he had lived fast and hard, the physical machine was getting worn out ; decay of the nerve centres had set in. Again, as after Dresden, his imperious nature succumbed and spoilt another great opportunity.

But in his preparations for Waterloo, in his dispositions, his plan of operations, his rapid movements in the earliest stages of the campaign, Napoleon was assuredly little below his best. It is generally admitted by military critics that his strategy was superior to that of his adversaries. His design was excellent ; the very direction of his march struck at the weakest point of the enemy's line. Had he promptly followed his initial advantage, and been properly served by his lieutenants, he would have separated the Allies, and rolling each up along his own divergent line of retreat, would have prevented them from again joining forces.

On the other hand, there is little doubt but that Wellington was out-generalled. Our great Duke, for reasons that have

never been explained, never expected attack from the quarter where it seemed most probable. He looked for Napoleon on his right striking at his communications with the sea. Contrary to the opinion of all modern strategists, Wellington maintained to his dying day that it was by this line Napoleon should have advanced, and not by that which now appears obvious, the centre. Hence the English lay mostly to that side, and even when the French movement was fully developed, their concentration to the threatened point was slow. Wellington could hardly believe the fact when it became undeniable, and to the last scarcely realised the importance of Quatre Bras to his plans and his army. Napoleon thrust himself in between the Allies, and but for the dilatoriness of his generals, who neglected to close up their advancing but straggling columns, he would have been so immensely superior to the Prussians that he could have easily brushed them aside and marched on Brussels before Wellington's army could assemble to oppose him.

The occupation of Brussels was Napoleon's principal aim. Had he succeeded in gaining

the advantage this fine strategy deserved, had the English been compelled to withdraw on their ships, the Prussians towards the Rhine, he might have been in a position to obtain peace. The English Ministry would have fallen, the Opposition was really friendly to him, and if England had withdrawn from the coalition of his enemies, they might have gone to pieces. The triumphant possession of Belgium would have appealed to the French people, and have given him a new lease of power. Both politically and strategically his plan of campaign was a daring stroke of genius, finely conceived, but failing in execution. Time was the essence of the situation, yet from the very first time was hopelessly but irretrievably lost. Here the causes already mentioned chiefly interposed. Ill-health had undermined his personal vigour. Napoleon left Paris unwell both in body and mind. To the mysterious failure of physical powers was superadded a depression of spirits, a gloomy anticipation of coming misfortune, that greatly militated against success in the game that demands unbounded self-reliance and nerve. He

believed now that his luck had really turned, and he firmly believed in luck. "What a force it is!" he cried. "It alone imparts courage. It is the feeling that fortune is with us that gives us the hardihood to dare. Not to dare is to do nothing of moment, and one never dares except in the confidence that fortune will favour us."

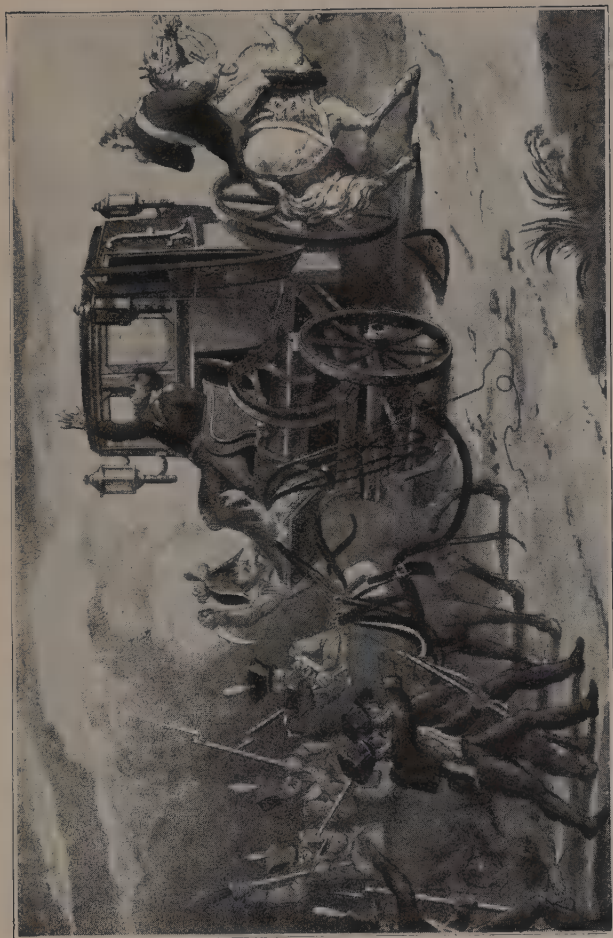
These forebodings were, no doubt, justified by the severe buffets he had lately received. Nor was it, after all, his want of daring that now ruined him, for he dared much, but the many mischances that marred his operations, some of them fairly attributable to ill luck. Napoleon had undoubtedly won the first moves. He had counted upon what he believed were the personal characteristics of his opponents — that Wellington would be very cautious and Blücher over-eager. So he planned to push in past the one and draw on the other only to fall a prey to his concentrated and overwhelming forces. All this he had secured on the 15th, the first day of this brief but most eventful campaign. But now began the delays which might be called ill luck, but which were really due to want of vigour.

On the evening of that first day Napoleon was so worn out that he slept late next morning, and when he woke he was still too feeble to attend to business. This was the time when Ney, with the advance, was within striking distance of one weak division of Dutch Belgians at Quatre Bras, and Wellington, hastening up with supports from Brussels, was still a long way off. Ney should have been on the move at daylight, 3 a.m., but still he halted waiting for orders, and none were issued till Napoleon appeared at 11 a.m. Eight precious hours were gone—hours, as has been well said, of which each was worth a reinforcement of 10,000 men—and with them the chance of penetrating the slender barrier of Quatre Bras. Napoleon told Ney he would join him as soon as he had disposed of the gathering Prussians, whom he estimated at some 40,000; but Ney, believing that Blücher's whole army was at Ligny, still hung back, watching them. The serious attack on Quatre Bras did not begin till 2.30, and by that time Wellington and Picton's division were close at hand.

Meanwhile Napoleon had begun the battle

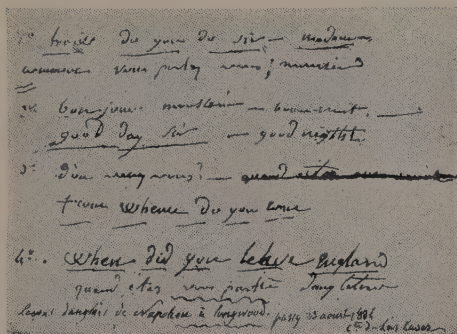
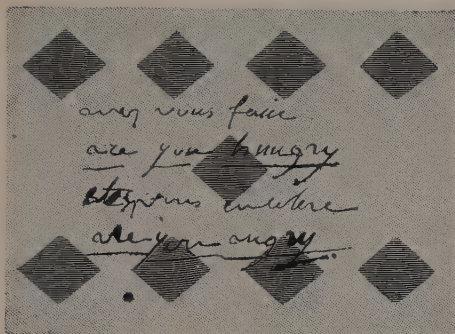
of Ligny. Ney was to co-operate by outflanking the Prussian left as soon as he had swept the English out of the way. This order was the first cause of a series of misadventures that lost the services of a whole corps, d'Erlon's, to both Napoleon and Ney. For as d'Erlon was advancing to support the latter, to whose command he belonged, an aide-de-camp turned him off towards Ligny, where his unexpected appearance—an unknown body feared to be English—delayed Napoleon's final attack till nearly too late. Ney meanwhile had peremptorily recalled the errant d'Erlon, who now left the neighbourhood of Ligny without aiding in the action. In his absence Ney had been defeated by Wellington.

But for these delays and mischances the result of the fighting must have been very different at Quatre Bras. The defeat of the Prussians at Ligny, too, would have been much more decisive if Ney could have taken them in flank. All through Napoleon had been far too deliberate. Now after the victory he again lost invaluable time. The pursuit should have been prosecuted with promptitude and vigour. Yet nothing was



ATTACK ON NAPOLEON'S CARRIAGE AFTER THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO

done till noon next day. Again, Napoleon had been prostrated with fatigue and slept



NOTES WRITTEN BY NAPOLEON ON PLAYING CARDS WHEN HE WAS TRYING TO LEARN ENGLISH AT ST HELENA

late; when he rose it was to gossip on politics and Parisian small talk, not to act. Grouchy did not get his orders to follow up

the Prussians till midday; Ney certainly had been told to advance, but he was out of humour, and made no move till Napoleon joined him at 1 p.m. Three hours earlier, Wellington, informed of Blücher's defeat, had withdrawn, unmolested and in perfect order, to the position at Waterloo. Napoleon followed slowly, hardly daring to hope that the hated English would risk a battle with him. That Wellington would not, in truth, have fought at Waterloo unless he had been satisfied that Blücher would support is now an established fact in history. How he gained that assurance, whether by a personal visit to Blücher's bedside in the dead of night or by a despatch from the Prussian headquarters, or both, we may never certainly know; but that the battle was the result of concerted action between the allied commanders is now proved beyond all question.

Napoleon was only anxious lest the English should escape him. He was on the move during the night, watching their bivouac fires, and in the morning rubbed his hands with glee as he saw them still there. "Ces Anglais! Enfin je les tiens!"



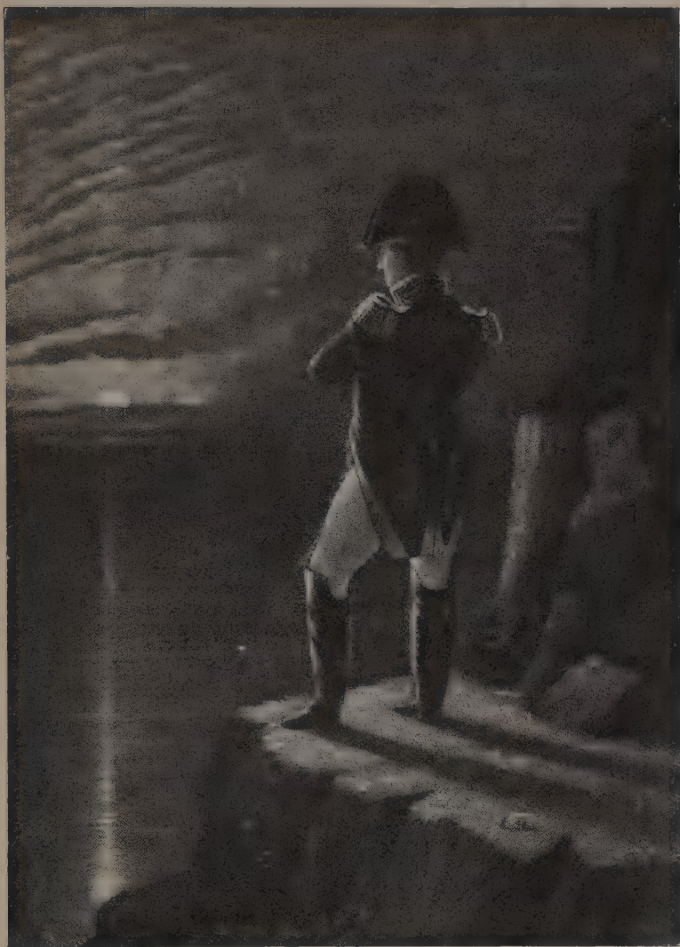
NAPOLÉON EMBARKING ON BOARD THE "BELLEROPHON"

he cried, and turned fiercely on his generals Soult and Foy, who warned him that he would find us tough customers. "Les Anglais en duel sont le diable," Foy had said. When Soult spoke in the same strain his master cruelly replied, "You believe in these English because they have always beaten you." So confident was Napoleon of his coming triumph that he marched his troops into their positions slowly, with bands playing and all the pomp and circumstance of war. No doubt the ground was so heavy with recent rain that the movement of artillery was difficult; still the battle might have begun before 11.30 a.m., and the delay was all in Wellington's favour. It brought the Prussians nearer, and they would have been on the ground early in the afternoon had not Bülow's, the leading corps, been halted at St Lambert by order of Gneisenau, the Prussian Chief of the Staff, who disliked Wellington and distrusted his promise to stand and fight at Waterloo.

The great battle is too well known to need detailed description. The French assumed the offensive throughout, until at

last the Prussian advance compromised the right flank and necessitated a defensive action on that side. Then the failure of the last attack incited Wellington to charge the discomfited foe. There were five attacks: the first, on Hougomont, which failed; a second, on Papelotte and Haye Sainte, in which the first only was taken; the third, a great attack upon the allied centre, which was repulsed; the fourth, the splendid but premature charge of the whole of the French cavalry, which was shattered against the British squares; and the fifth and last, the tremendous effort made by the Imperial Guard, which proved no longer invincible.

In all, the unshaken heroism of the British troops could not be overcome, but their efforts were no doubt greatly aided by the tactical skill of their almost ubiquitous leader. Wellington was all over the field, and always at the critical point. Napoleon, on the other hand, took post at the opening of the engagement on the hill of Rossomme, from which he issued his directions. It has been held that but for the Prussian attack, Napoleon would have



NAPOLEON AT ST HELENA

(From a Mezzotint)

overcome the sturdy resistance of the English. There was no doubt one crisis in the fight after the capture of La Haye Sainte, about 5 p.m., when Wellington's line was broken, and but for his vigilance and promptitude in bringing up troops to fill the gap, the tide might have turned against him. Now he must have felt the urgent need of the division he had kept at Hal, 18,000 men, eight miles from the battlefield, too far to be useful, and thus lost through his persistent anxiety for his right flank.

Again, Napoleon's numbers on the field, which had a slight advantage over Wellington's, being as 72,000 men with 246 guns, to 68,000 with 156 guns, would have been preponderating, but for the errors that deprived him of the assistance of Grouchy. That Marshal, by too implicit and unintelligent obedience of his orders, was still pursuing the Prussians, but in the wrong direction, and, as we know, they lent their weight to Wellington, while Grouchy was lost to Napoleon. Much controversy has arisen as to who was most to blame, the supreme commander or the subordinate;

but nothing can excuse Grouchy's neglect of a fundamental principle of warfare—to work towards the guns. He heard the sounds of fighting towards Waterloo early in the day, and had he followed the true instinct of a soldier he would have met the messengers sent to hurry him forward to the scene of conflict. Instead of which he fought a small useless engagement with one corps, and was absent from the decisive point—Waterloo.

Four days later, June 22, Napoleon, who had fled post-haste to Paris, signed his second abdication. A terrible and most complete collapse ended the moving drama of the "Hundred Days." "My public life is finished," said Napoleon, although he had not quite abandoned hope, and thought that he might be retained as the first soldier of the nation, under some new Directory. France would have none of him: it was truly sick of the Great Adventurer, who hurried now to Rochefort, thinking to escape to the United States. But he could not get through the vigilant English cruisers, and on July 15 he surrendered himself to Captain Maitland, of H.M.S.



NAPOLEON'S GRAVE

Bellerophon. He made no conditions, but placed himself unreservedly in the hands of England. It was his only chance, indeed, of safety, for Blücher wanted to shoot him on the very spot that he had caused the Duc d'Enghien to be murdered. It must have cost Napoleon much to submit to the enemy he had most bitterly hated. "I come," he wrote the Prince Regent, "like Themistocles, to seat myself at the hearth of the British people; I place myself under the protection of the English laws, which I claim as the most powerful, the most constant, the most generous of my enemies."

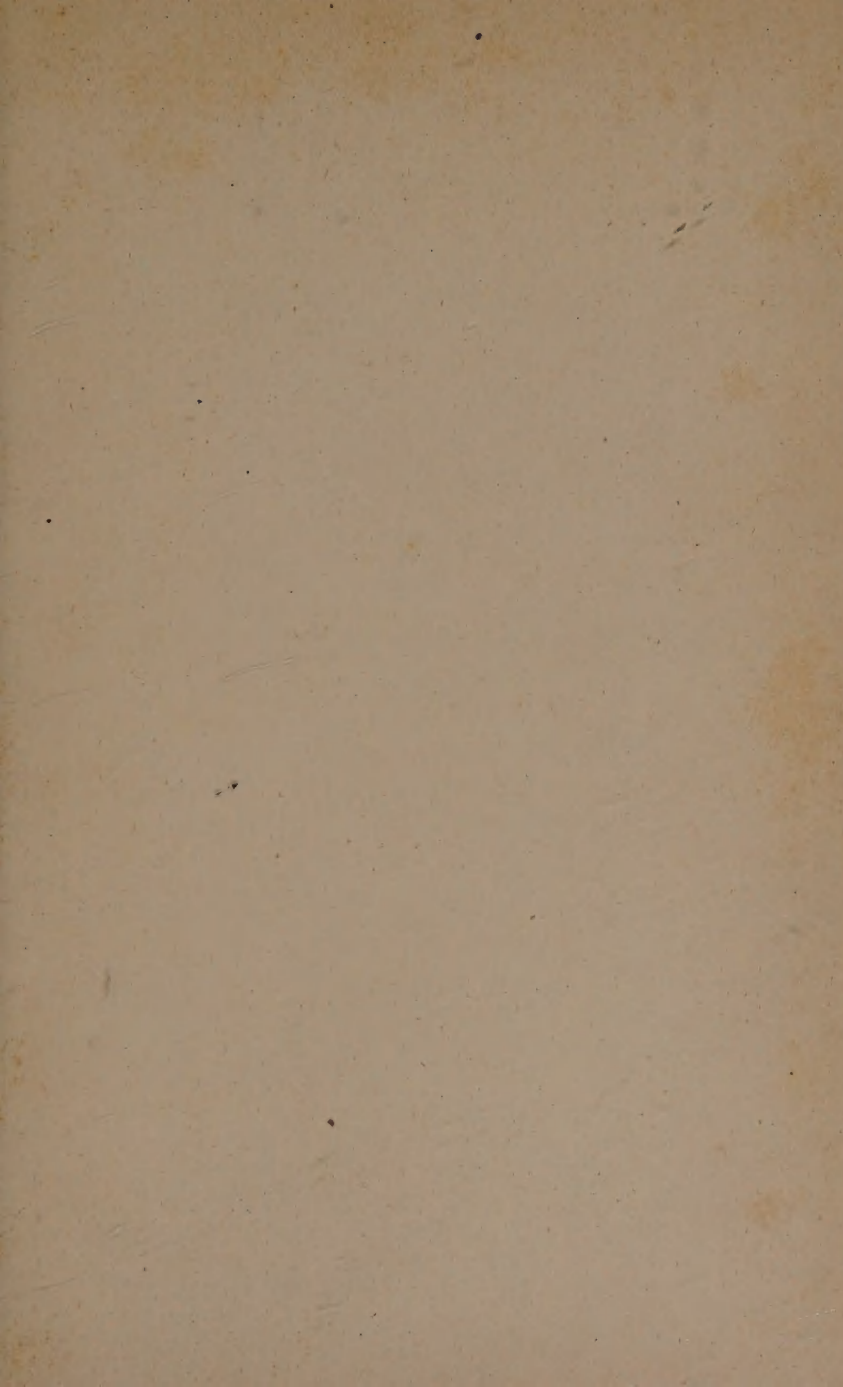
England, in the person of her Government, was surely wanting in chivalry to her fallen foe. There was a pettiness unworthy of a great nation in denying her prisoner the empty honours of rank and title; in steadily refusing to recognise the ex-Emperor as anything but General Bonaparte. But his life, at least, was held sacred, and his exile to the rocky prison-house of St Helena may be defended as required on sound public grounds. Yet the conditions regulating his detention seem unnecessarily harsh and irksome.

The choice of his future jailer was, at least, unfortunate, and the protests that came to Europe like a distant voice found a sympathetic and pitying echo. Still, the demeanour of his bright spirit that had once illumined all the world and was now nearly extinguished, was hardly consonant with its past effulgence, and it flickered out at last amid unworthy squabbles and an unworthy attempt to vindicate his career by correcting truth. How low the mighty had fallen was still more emphasised by the mean vindictiveness of his will, wherein he bequeathed a legacy to the Frenchman who had sought to assassinate Wellington.



THE FUNERAL OF NAPOLEON IN PARIS, DECEMBER 15, 1840

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